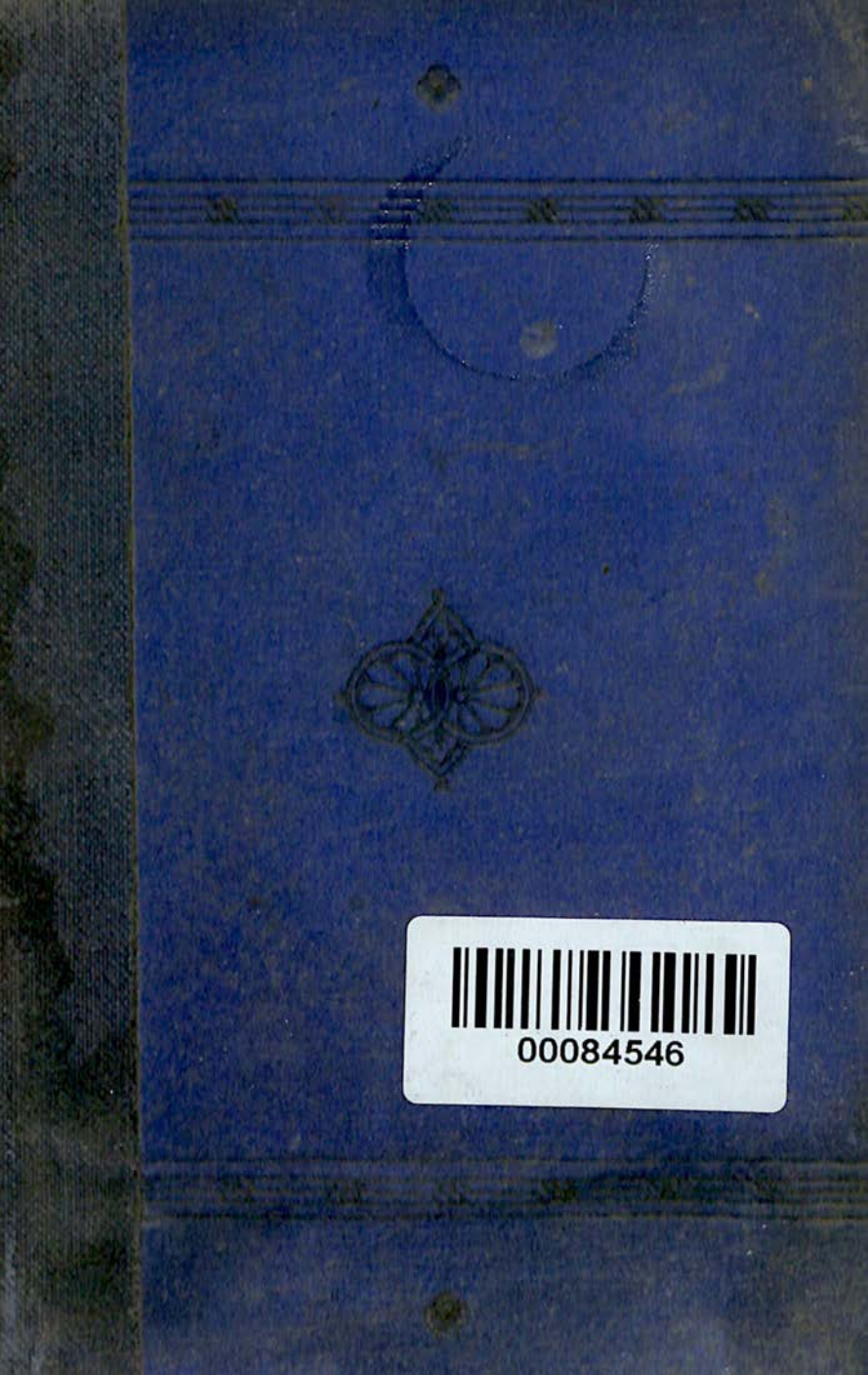
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LETTERS FROM MUSKOKA.

BY

AN EMIGRANT LADY.

84546

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PREFACE

TO THE

"LETTERS OF AN EMIGRANT LADY."

IN laying before the public a sketch of our "Bush" experiences during the first year after our arrival in Muskoka, Ontario, Canada, I desire to state the reasons which prompted us to such an imprudent step as emigration, without even the moderate capital necessary for any one who would start with the slightest chance of success. The Franco-German War in 1870 was the means of breaking up our

happy home in France, which, with one short interval, had been the shelter of my family and myself during fifteen years of widowhood.

The commencement of the war found us living in the outskirts of St. Pierre-lès-Calais, a suburb of Calais, and a busy place, full of lace factories. Our house and grounds, quite open to the country at the back, fronted the canal which communicates with the sea at Calais.

When the war had made some progress, and the German army appeared to be steadily advancing through France, we found ourselves in a most unpleasant dilemma—in fact, literally between fire and water!

The civic authorities made known that, in case of the approach of a German army, it was their fixed intention to cut the sluices, and to lay the adjacent country under water for a distance of ten miles, and to a depth

of seven feet. Our large, rambling, convenient old mansion, which shook with every gale of wind, and had no cellarage nor secure foundation of any kind, we felt would surely be submerged.

Moreover, the military commandant notified that in case Calais were threatened with siege, all houses and buildings within the military zone would be blown up, to allow free range for the cannon on the ramparts. This was pleasant intelligence to people in the direct line of fire, and with a certainty of very short notice to quit being given. Still, we took the chances, and stood our ground.

We felt the deepest sympathy for the French, and would willingly have helped them to the extent of our very limited means, but could only do so by lending beds and bedding for the wounded, which we did, and which were all scrupulously returned at the close of the war.

At this time I had a married daughter residing at Guiñes, where her husband was mathematical professor in the principal English school, conducted by a French gentleman. In the middle of August, about midnight, we heard a carriage drive to the door, and found that my son-in-law had thought it more prudent to bring his family to a safer place than Guiñes, which, being quite an open town, was at any time liable to incursions from the dreaded Uhlans. He was obliged to return to his employers, who could not be left with the sole responsibility of a numerous school consisting mostly of English scholars.

A few days afterwards, on an alarm that the Germans had entered Amiens, we all took refuge in Calais, where, as soon as the war broke out, I had taken the precaution to secure apartments. We had most of our property hastily packed up and placed in

store. In Calais we remained till nearly the beginning of winter, when my son-in-law took his family back to Guiñes and we returned to our house. In fact it began to be recognised that Calais was too far out of the way, and presented too little temptation to a conquering army to make it likely we should be molested.

The spring of 1871 brought great changes, both public and private. The war ended, but France was no longer the same country to us. My eldest son had left us to take a situation in London in the office of the kind friends who had known him from boyhood, and whose father, recently dead, had been our neighbour for fifteen years, his beautiful garden and pleasure-grounds joining our more humble premises.

Before the summer was over, my son-in-law, whose health suffered from his scholastic duties, made up his mind to emigrate to

Canada, and to join my youngest son who, after many misfortunes, had settled on the "free-grant lands" of Muskoka, and who wrote frequently, to urge other members of the family to come out before all the good land near his location was taken up. At this time he was himself thriving, but immediately after suffered great reverses. He had a rheumatic fever which lasted many weeks, and threw him back in his farming; he lost one of his two cows from the carelessness of a neighbour, and most of his crops from the dry season and their being put in too late, and was only beginning to recover when his sister and her family arrived, having with them his affianced wife.

My eldest daughter and myself were thus left alone in France, and were obliged to give up our cherished home, my reduced income being quite insufficient to maintain it.

Virulent small-pox and other epidemics,

the result of effluvia from the battle-fields, broke out, and I had dangerous illness in my own family. Provisions rose to an enormous price, taxation greatly increased, and the country bid fair to be long in an unsettled condition. Under these circumstances we, too, began to think of emigration; and finding that my eldest son, always accustomed to a domestic circle, was very dull in London without one, and at the same time not disinclined to try farming, being fond of an out-door active life, we came to the decision to emigrate.

He relinquished his excellent situation, his employers behaving with the greatest kindness and liberality. We read up a few books on emigration which invariably paint it in the brightest colours, and being quite ignorant of the expense of so long a journey, of the hardships of the "Bush," and of the absolute necessity for a sum of money to begin with,

we came out hoping in our innocence that strong hearts, willing hands, and the pension of an officer's widow would be inexhaustible riches in the wilderness.

The problem remains to be solved whether we can continue our farming without capital, or whether we shall be compelled to go to one of the large towns in Canada or the "States," to seek for remunerative employment.

LETTERS FROM AN EMIGRANT LADY.

LETTER I.

YOU ask me, my dear child, to give you a few particulars of our voyage across the Atlantic to Canada, our journey from Quebec to the Bush of Muskoka, and our residence here as emigrant farmers for the last year. As in my diary I have only chronicled the bare events of each passing day, you must only expect outlines of Bush life, and not well filled up pictures. I pass over the anguish of my separation from you and your dear ones, and can only say that when I thought of the attached circle of friends we were leaving behind us, both in France and

England, whom probably we should never see again, I felt strongly tempted to remain; but the fact that others of the family had preceded us, and would be expecting our arrival, that our baggage was already shipped, and that your brother had taken leave of his friendly employers, who to the last counselled him to retain his situation, had weight enough with me to prevent any change of plan. We went on board the good ship *T——s* lying in the Thames, at least twenty-four hours too soon, and lay awake the whole of the first night, as the carpenters never ceased working, the ship having met with an accident on her previous voyage.

The next morning I was greatly grieved to find that your brother had only engaged *two* first-cabin berths for your sister and myself; and finding that our purse was very scantily filled, had, with his usual self-denial, taken a steerage passage for himself, and got a good-

natured quartermaster to take charge of our dear French dog old "Nero," who forthwith became a *stowaway*, and was smuggled out of sight.

When the vessel was ready, we dropped down the river to Gravesend, and having taken in more passengers and emigrants, we started for Plymouth. We remained there for a few hours, and I pointed out to your brother and sister the beautiful spot called "Drake's Island," where, long before *they* were born, I had passed a delightful summer and autumn with your dear papa and my two babies. Our regiment was then stationed at Plymouth, and your papa commanded the guard placed on the island for the protection of the powder magazine.

The weather was beautiful when we left Plymouth, and was expected to remain so till the end of the voyage; but after a few days, when well out in the Atlantic, a tre-

mendous gale set in which lasted for several days and nights.

I had been in storms two or three times off the Irish coast, but confess that I never felt so frightened as when at every roll our ship gave (and she *was* a *roller*), we heard a horrid grating sound which we shrewdly suspected to be caused by part of our cargo of iron which had shifted its place, and kept moving with every motion of the ship. We were told on arriving at Quebec that this unexpected storm was occasioned by a hurricane in the West Indies. Most of the passengers, as well as ourselves, were possessed by the demon of sea-sickness, and your sister was hardly able to get up during the whole passage.

The tedium of our confinement was, however, much relieved by the pleasant society and kindness of two most amiable English ladies, who were going out to reside with a

near relative at Montreal. Every day, after the saloon dinner, they came to our cabin, which they christened the "drawing-room," and our pleasant conversations there laid the foundation of a friendship which I trust will ever remain unbroken. Our nights from various causes were weary and sleepless, but in the early morning and for some hours we had a diversion, which the proximity of our cabin to the steward's pantry procured for us. Almost as soon as it was light, *Jupiter thundered from Olympus*, or in other words our black steward, who was punctiliously addressed as "Mr. H——s," began the day's proceedings by having the crockery and glass broken during the night by the rolling of the ship removed, and every order was given with a dignified pomposity which was most amusing.

We gave him and his assistants the sobriquet of "Jupiter and his satellites!" Mr.

H——s was a portly negro of an imposing presence, and a benign expression of countenance which a little reminded one of "Uncle Tom" in Mrs. Beecher Stowe's celebrated work. He exacted implicit obedience, but he was a very good man, strictly honest to his employers, and very considerate to those over whom he had any authority. Not once during the voyage did we hear from his lips an oath or an unseemly word.

The stewardess told us that he had a very pretty wife in London, a young Englishwoman, with a remarkably fair complexion. She also told us an amusing anecdote of Mr. H——s as steward of a troop-ship going out to India. One Sunday afternoon the young officers, tired of playing off practical jokes on each other, and half dead with *ennui*, applied to Mr. H——s to lend them a book to read.

"You know the sort of book we want,

H——s," said they; "plenty of love and fighting, and battles, and all that sort of thing!"

"I understand, gentlemen," said Mr. H——s, and presently returned with a *large Bible* which he placed before them. "There, gentlemen, you will find in that book all you want—beautiful love stories, fierce wars, and plenty of battles!"

His colour, however, was somewhat against him, and I could hardly keep my countenance when a young under-steward, to whom we were indebted for much attention, said to me with quite an injured air, "You know, ma'am, it does take it out of a feller to have to say 'sir' to a nigger!"

Of the young friend C. W., who came out with us, we saw but little, for though he had a first-class berth, he was a great deal in the steerage with your brother, who was a veritable "Mark Tapley" among the poor

emigrants. He helped the minister in charge to keep order among them, he procured all manner of little extra comforts for the sick women from the surly cooks, and was the delight of all the children, who followed him in troops. He managed to be a good deal in our cabin when we were too ill to move, and also came to us on deck when we were able to crawl there. He was a favourite with all our fellow-passengers, and every lady knew she might depend upon his gentlemanly attentions if required. This comforted me a little for his being in such a disagreeable position.

The sea continued very rough indeed even after we were in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and though I thought the *real blue water* which I saw for the first time very beautiful, yet I could by no means join in the raptures of my fellow-passengers, but strictly averred, that although a passionate admirer of "Old

Ocean," it was most decidedly when I viewed it from *terra-firma*. I will not weary you with minute details of our slow passage up the beautiful St. Lawrence, nor dilate upon the interest I felt in watching, first the thinly-scattered white huts, and afterwards the thickly-clustered villages of the "habitants," with their curious churches and shining spires, backed by the dark pine forests, and behind them ranges of blue-capped mountains, compared with which the hills of my own dear England were as hillocks.

We landed at Quebec and went to the Victoria Hotel, where your sister and I passed a few miserable hours of suspense and anxiety. We found ourselves at the very beginning of an immense journey utterly without means to carry us on beyond the first few stages. The little extra expenses paid on leaving the ship, and the clearing our baggage as far

as Toronto, had all but emptied our purse. We were rich in nothing but delusive hopes and expectations, doomed, like the glass basket of celebrated "Alnaschars," to be shattered and broken to pieces.

We half expected to find a letter with a small remittance waiting for us at the Quebec P. O. Our young friend C. W. was in the same strait, as his money-order was only payable in a bank at Toronto. Both the gentlemen left us and crossed the water to the town of Quebec, where, finding on due inquiry no letter of any kind, your brother was compelled to pledge his gold watch and seal, upon which, though so valuable, he could only get five pounds advanced. This unavoidable delay lost us the mid-day train to Montreal, by which we saw our kind friends depart after taking a most affectionate leave and engaging us to correspond with them. When our two gentlemen returned we were

nearly starving, as we did not like to go to the *table-d'hôte* without them, and the dinner had long been over. We all sallied forth, and found in a small wayside tavern a homely but excellent meal, and best of all, a private room to take it in. From thence we went to the station and started by the seven p.m. train for Montreal, being quite thankful that our journey had at length begun.

LETTER II.

MY last letter left us starting from Quebec in the seven p.m. train for Montreal. Our party consisting of four people, we had a compartment to ourselves, but were some time in settling comfortably, as our old dog "Nero" had to be smuggled in and kept quiet under your sister's waterproof-cloak, for fear the vigilant guard should consign him to the luggage-car, where he would infallibly have barked himself to death.

I noticed very little in the neighbourhood of Quebec, being too much occupied with my

own sad thoughts, and regrets for those I had left behind; but I did observe that the cows, horses, and pigs all appeared very small and manifestly inferior to the cattle in England.

During this journey I could not help contrasting the mode of travelling in Canada with the same in the "old country," and giving a decided preference to the former. It would be almost impossible for either murder, robbery, or any kind of outrage to be perpetrated where the compartments are all open, and the supervision of the guard walking up and down incessant. It is also a great alleviation to the fatigue of travelling to have the refreshment of iced water to drink, and the option of washing faces and hands. Towards night we were beguiled into "Pullman's" sleeping-cars, little imagining how greatly it would add to the expense of the journey. Sleep, however, I found to be impossible in these close boxes, tier above

tier, and towards midnight, half smothered, I made my way to the carriage we had occupied before retiring.

About this time the train came to a sudden stop, and at last I asked the guard why we were so long stationary. He told me that a train which ought to have been in before us was missing, that men had gone out with lanterns to look for it, and that for fear of being run into we must wait till it came up. A most dreary four hours we passed before we were released. We were at a small station in a barren spot of country, where nothing was to be seen in the dim light but a few miserable-looking wooden houses scattered about. It was a cheerless prospect, and we were thankful when at length we went on.

We passed the morning more agreeably, as the guard, a quiet, intelligent man, entered into conversation with us. He was telling us of a curious and erudite book about

to be published at Boston, Massachusetts, compiled by one of his relations, from numerous records and papers treasured in the family, and handed down from one generation to another, beginning with the first landing of the "Pilgrim Fathers."

His ancestor, with his family, came out in the *Mayflower*, and from that time to the present they had had an unbroken succession of godly ministers, who in the early times of their settlement were called, in the old Puritan phraseology, "sons of thunder." In the spring of 1871, he had attended the annual family gathering at Boston, to which the remotest connections, if possible, came. I regret much that I did not take down his name.

In consequence of our long delay in the night, we did not arrive at Montreal in time for the early train, but had to breakfast there, and remain a few hours. When we started,

we found that we had a hot and dusty journey before us. I greatly admired the environs of Montreal, particularly some pretty villa residences, perched, as it were, in terraces one above the other.

An incident occurred in the course of the day which afforded me a few moments of exquisite satisfaction, which every mother will understand.

While our train was drawn up before a small station, an emigrant train, going to some distant part, went past. Numbers of the emigrants were there who had been steerage passengers on board our vessel from England. As your brother was standing, with C. W., on the steps of one of the carriages, he was recognised, and they immediately vociferated, "Mr. K.! Mr. K.! three cheers for Mr. K.!" Then arose three deafening cheers, which died away in the distance; but not before your sister and I

looking out of the window, saw an indefinite number of pocket-handkerchiefs, of all colours and dimensions, fluttering from the windows in token of recognition.

Towards the evening of this day, as we were nearing Toronto, another stoppage occurred, similar to the one of the night before. A baggage-truck had got off the line, and might be expected at any moment to run into our train.

On this occasion I could not but think our situation most alarming. We were drawn up on a narrow bridge over a foaming torrent, with jagged rocks sticking up from the bottom, suggesting a not very pleasant fate had we been rolled over. Here we remained for four hours and a half. Luckily I was so much occupied with my own thoughts, that I did not hear a gentleman in an adjoining compartment recounting to his horrified audience an accident on the Boston Railway,

in which he had been a reluctant participator, the week before, and which occurred to a train in a similar position to ours. This train waited for many hours, *was* at last run into, and twenty-five of the passengers were killed. Your sister heard every word, but took care not to disturb my meditations.

This accident detained us so long, that it was past midnight when we got into Toronto, and, hiring a carriage, were driven to a respectable, cheap family hotel, strongly recommended to your brother by a kind and gentlemanly Canadian, who was our fellow-passenger from England.

Unfortunately they were full, from garret to cellar, and could not take us in. Our driver, left to his own devices, took us to the "Rossin House," where we remained till the next day, most *supremely uncomfortable*, in a rambling hotel of immense extent, where I lost my way every time I left the

saloon; where, from not knowing the hours, we were all but starved; and where it was hardly possible to obtain a civil answer from any one of the attendants.

We started from Toronto at three p.m. the next day, leaving our young friend C. W. behind, who, having drawn his money, was going back to Montreal, to pass a little time there before joining us in the Bush. He had also to present letters of introduction to Judge J——n, who was *known* to be *able* and *presumed* to be *willing*, to assist the views of the son of his old friend.

The farther we went from Toronto, the more barren and ugly the country appeared, and the hideous stumps in every clearing became more and more visible. By degrees also the gardens by the roadside became more denuded of floral vegetation, till at last my eyes rested for miles on little but holly-hocks and pumpkins. Towards dusk, the

lurid glare of the burning trees in the far-off forest became appalling, as well as magnificent. I was told that the season had been exceptionally dry, no rain having fallen for three months, and that in different parts the fires had been most destructive. In almost every case these fires have been the natural result of some incidental carelessness. Some wayfarer, far from his home, and camping out for the night, leaves the smouldering ashes of his fire to be blown into a flame by a sudden breeze, or flings the ashes of his pipe into the adjacent brushwood; in leaving the place of his temporary halt, he little imagines the loss of property, and even of life, which may be occasioned by his thoughtlessness.

We slept that night at Belle Ewart, a rising town on Lake Simere, and the next morning took the steamer to Orillia. This passage across the lake was the most beau-

tiful part of our journey. The day was bright and clear, the water blue, and the scenery most beautiful. All was changed when we landed at Orillia. We had to leave our nice, roomy, well-appointed steamer for a filthy, over-crowded little boat, where we had hardly standing-room.

I now saw, for the first time, *real live Indians*, both men and women, some of each being on board the boat. Their encampment on the lake was likewise pointed out to me. Alas for my enthusiasm! Alas for my remembrance of youthful delight over Cooper's enchanting novels! I was never more disappointed in my life than when I first took notice of these degenerate samples of "Red Men!"

The men appeared to me undersized and sinister-looking, the squaws filthy and almost repulsive. No stretch of imagination could bring before me in the persons of these very

ordinary mortals the dignified and graceful "Uncas," or the stately and warlike "Chingachook!" We landed at Washage, and after standing for more than an hour on the quay, took the stage-wagon for Gravenhurst, the vehicle being so crowded that even the personal baggage most essential to our comfort had to be left behind. Oh! the horrors of that journey! The road was most dreadful—our first acquaintance with "corduroy" roads. The forest gradually closed in upon us, on fire on both sides, burnt trees crashing down in all directions, here and there one right across the road, which had to be dragged out of the way before we could go on. Your brother with his arm round me the whole way (I clinging to the collar of his coat), could hardly keep me steady as we bumped over every obstacle. In the worst places I was glad to shut my eyes that I might not see the danger. Your poor sister had

to cling convulsively to the rope which secured the passengers' baggage (ours was left behind and we did not see it for weeks) to avoid being thrown out, and for long afterwards we both suffered from the bruises we received and the strain upon our limbs. At last, long after dark, we arrived at Gravenhurst, where we were obliged to sleep, as the steamer to Bracebridge could not start before morning on account of the fog. The steamboat had no accommodation for sleeping, but we had a good supper on board, and a gentlemanly Englishman, a passenger by the stage and well acquainted with Muskoka, took us to a small hotel to sleep. The next morning we went to Bracebridge, and there we found a letter from your brother-in-law advising me to go before the commissioner of crown-lands and sign for my land. The papers for my free grant of a hundred acres had gone to France, but had missed me,

as I had already left. Unfortunately our means were too exhausted to allow of our remaining even one day in Bracebridge, and we thought it more prudent to start early in the stage-wagon, as the magistrate's office would not be open till ten a.m.

The not being able to sign at once lost me the power of selling my pine-trees, the new law (a most unjust one) coming into operation before I was able to come in again. We were at the N. A. Hotel, and the mistress of it, herself an Englishwoman and not long from Devonshire, told me afterwards how sincerely she pitied us, and said to her husband when we were gone, "That poor lady and her daughter little know what hardships they are about to encounter in the 'Bush!'" The drive from Bracebridge to Utterson, the nearest post-town to our settlement and distant from it six miles, was a long and fatiguing stretch of fifteen miles, but un-

marked by any incident of consequence. The forest fires were burning fiercely, and our driver told us that a week before the road had been impassable. At times when the trees were burning at each side of the narrow road we felt a hot stifling air as we passed rapidly along. It was a gloomy afternoon, with fitful gusts of wind portending a change of weather, and we were almost smothered in clouds of Muskoka dust, much resembling pounded bricks. When we got to Utterson we were obliged to remain for two hours to rest the poor horses, as no fresh ones were to be got. While at the little tavern we heard that your brother C. had been married a few weeks before, as we expected, and that your dear sister F., with her husband, children, and the *fiancée*, had rested there on their way to the "Bush," six weeks before our arrival. We were more easy in our minds after this. We were near our journey's end, the dear

ones who had preceded us were all well, and the marriage which for four years I had been endeavouring to secure for your youngest brother had been happily accomplished. *I* alone of all our party felt a hopeless depression of spirits, a presentiment of long months of unhappiness. Our drive from Utterson was short, but we went slowly, and it was late in the day before we turned into the "Bush." Our driver called the path we were going a "road;" I saw nothing but a narrow track with frightful stumps, over which our wagon jolted in a manner to endanger our limbs; indeed, though more than three miles from your brother-in-law's, we soon insisted on walking, thinking it safer. We found the thick undergrowth of "ground-hemlock" very trying to walk upon, as it caught our feet in an alarming manner. Our path was intersected by deep gullies, the sides of which were precipitous. I must say

that the horses of this country, like the mules of Spain, seem wonderfully sure-footed, and the drivers, who mostly appear as reckless and daring as Irish carmen, guide them very safely, and accidents rarely occur.

After we had crossed the second gully, our driver said he could go no farther, as it would be dark before he got out of the "Bush," a thing much dreaded here. Accordingly your brother paid and dismissed him, and we were left with all our packages by the roadside to find our way as best we could. Luckily we came upon a very respectable settler, working on a part of his clearing near the path, who most kindly left his work and piloted us to your brother-in-law's lot, where we found a very small "clearing," and a log-house in the middle of it. Your sister F. and the dear children came running out to meet and welcome us, and after the first warm congratulations, F. and

your brother went to fetch the newly-married couple, who at once came back with them. There was much to hear and to tell, and you may judge how great was our dismay to find that those we had come to burthen with our presence, were for the time being as penniless as ourselves, and that weary and fatigued as we were, the only refreshment my dear child could offer us was linseed tea without sugar or milk, and sour, doughy bread which I could not persuade myself to swallow. Our sleeping arrangements were of the most primitive description. A scanty curtain shaded off a corner of the room, where your dear sister made a regular shake-down of all her little stock of bedding. Here your two sisters, your sister-in-law, the two children and myself found an ark of refuge. The three gentlemen lay down in their clothes before the fire; and thus passed our first night in the "Bush" of Muskoka!

LETTER III.

THE next morning, after a brief and very unsatisfactory toilet, and a breakfast which needs no description, your brother C. and his wife left us to return to their own log-house, entreating me to go and see them as soon as I should have recovered from the fatigue of the journey. You will perhaps wonder that they should have remained the night with us, overcrowded as we were; but the fact is, when we first came here, the forest-paths between our lots were so indistinctly marked out and so little trodden, that to be out after

dark was not safe ; and, indeed, it is a rule among the settlers here, that should any one be out after dark, the nearest neighbour must afford him a shelter till the morning. To go astray in the "Bush" is dreaded above everything.

I cannot describe how greatly we were shocked at the changed appearance of your youngest brother. In spite of his present happiness as a married man, he bore in his whole appearance the marks of the hardships he had gone through. He had left us, only a year before, in France in high health and spirits, expecting to find in America, and especially in New York, an El Dorado where he might easily employ his little capital to advantage. We found him now fearfully thin, his handsome face pinched and worn, and looking certainly ten years older than his brother, fully five years his senior. In some future letter I must give you a sketch of his

many misfortunes, his failure in New York, and subsequent settlement in Muskoka, together with the amusing account of his marriage given me by your sister F.

My first employment in the Bush was to write to my lawyer, entreating a further advance of money, and to some kind friends who had already helped us for the same purpose.

As soon as this necessary work was finished, I began to look about me, both outside and inside of the log-house. I found that it was placed in the centre of a very small "clearing" of not more than half an acre; and the very sight of the dense forest circling us all round, with hardly any perceptible outlet, gave me a dreadful feeling of suffocation, to which was added the constant alarm of fire, for the dry season had made every twig and leaf combustible.

Had it not been for these drawbacks, I

should greatly have admired the situation. An amphitheatre of rock behind the house, wooded to the very top, and the trees tinged with the glowing hues of autumn, was very picturesque; and the house itself, built upon an eminence, seemed likely to be dry and comfortable. The house, inside was simply one tolerable-sized room, which, like the cobbler's stall in the nursery ballad, was

"Kitchen, and parlour, and all!"

It was built of rough, unhewn logs, chinks of wood between the logs, and the interstices filled up with moss. There were two small windows, and a door in the front. The size of the house, eighteen feet by twenty-five.

When your brother-in-law's logs for his house were cut, he called a "raising bee," which is the custom here. Fourteen of his neighbours responded to the call. This is

for building up the walls of the log-house. Strength and willingness are most desirable at "bees;" but for the four corners, which have to be "saddled," skill is likewise requisite, and, therefore, four of the best hands are always chosen for the corners.

"Saddling" is cutting out a piece at the corner of each log, so that the end of each succeeding log, when it is raised, rests in the niche prepared for it, and thus the building, when finished, is as firm as a rock. Nothing is paid for the assistance given, but good meals are expected; and sometimes these "bees" are quite festive meetings, where the wives and daughters of the settlers wait at table, and attend to the wants of the hungry visitors. At a "bee" which your brother attended some time ago, all the young women were in their Sunday attire.

At your brother-in-law's "bee" the female element was entirely wanting, and two or

three little things went wrong; but excuses are always made for the ignorance of a new settler, and in subsequent meetings the fare has been better, and full satisfaction given.

In the centre of each log-house stands out, hideously prominent and ugly, a settler's stove, with a whole array of pots, pans, and kettles belonging to it, which, when not in use, are mostly hung up on the walls, certainly not conducing to their ornamentation. Your sister, always fertile in expedients, hangs a curtain before these unseemly appendages; but my lively imagination pierces behind the veil, and knowing they are *there*, gives me a feeling of irritation and disgust which I cannot describe.

I may truly call the stove a voracious monster, for in the very cold weather it takes nearly the whole day's chopping of one person to keep it filled up night and day.

You must not suppose that we had come into a furnished house. There had as yet been neither time nor means to get furniture of any kind. Dear F. had herself only been in possession a fortnight, and we were only too glad to sleep on the floor, to sit on upturned boxes, and to make our table of the top of a large chest. When at length, after many weeks' waiting, our baggage arrived, for some days we could hardly turn round; but we were most thankful for the excellent bedding and the good warm blankets we had brought from France, carefully packed in barrels. All woollen goods are extremely dear in Canada, and, as contrasted with our English manufactures, very poor in quality.

You know that, from boys, both your brothers have been excellent amateur carpenters, and this fact they have turned to good account in the "Bush." As soon as time

could be found, your eldest brother made a bedstead for his sister's confinement, and stools, and benches, which we found most useful. For a long time after our arrival in the "Bush," and even after your brother-in-law and myself had received remittances from England, we were in imminent danger of starvation from the coarse, bad food, and the difficulty of procuring it from a distance.

At the time of which I write, the autumn of 1871, there was neither store nor post-office nearer to us than that at Utterson, fully six miles from our land. I have already told you what kind of a road we found it on coming in. The gentlemen of our different families had to bring all provisions in sacks slung upon their shoulders and backs, no light work I can assure you.

The staple food of the settlers consists of

hard salt pork, potatoes, oatmeal, molasses, rice, and flour for bread, which every family makes for itself. According to the "rising," employed instead of yeast, the bread was either bitter, sour, or salt, and we only began to get good bread when our clergyman from Bracebridge, months after our arrival, recommended us to use the "Twin Brothers' yeast," which we found answer very well. With regard to other articles of consumption, such as tea, sugar, coffee, etc., I was then, and still am, decidedly of opinion that we were using up the refuse of all the shops in Toronto. The tea was full of sloe-leaves, wild raspberry-leaves, and other natural productions which never grew in China; and it was so full of bits of *stick* that my son informed the people at the store that we had collected a nice little stock for winter fuel.

My chemical knowledge was not sufficient

for me to analyse the coffee, which we really could not drink, but it was a villanous compound, of which the coffee-berry was the smallest ingredient; in short, we were fain to fall back upon and take into favour real chickory or dandelion, which, with a little milk and sugar, is tolerably nice, and as the roots are plentiful among the potato-hills in autumn, many of the settlers prepare it for their own use.

You know what a simple table we kept in France, but there our plain food was well cooked and prepared, and was the best of its kind.

We found the change terrible, and very injurious to our health, and, what was worse, the store was often out of the most necessary articles, and our messengers were compelled to return, weary and footsore, without what we wanted. We are much better off now, having a post-office and store

belonging to the settlement only three miles away, kept by very civil and intelligent Scotch people, who do their best to procure whatever is ordered.

We suffered much also from the want of fresh meat, for though at times some one in the neighbourhood might kill a sheep, yet we seldom heard of it before all the best parts were gone. We also greatly regretted that in a country where even the smaller lakes abound with fish, we were so far away from any piece of water that we could not obtain what would have been a most agreeable change from the much-detested salt pork.

I come now to speak of a delusion which is very general in the "old country," and in which I largely shared. I mean with regard to the great abundance of venison and game to be found in these parts. This fallacy is much encouraged by different books on emigration, which speak of these desirable articles

of food as being plentiful, and within the reach of every settler.

I certainly arrived with a vague notion that passing deer might be shot from one's own door, that partridge and wild-duck were as plentiful as sparrows in England, and that hares and rabbits might almost be caught with the hand. These romantic ideas were ruefully dispelled! There is little game of any kind left, and to get that good dogs are wanted, which are very expensive to keep.

None of our party have caught the most distant glimpse of a deer since we came, except your two brothers, who once saw a poor doe rush madly across the corner of C——s' clearing, hotly pursued by a trapper's deer-hound, at a season when it was against the law to shoot deer. Your sister-in-law once, venturing from C——s' clearing to ours without an escort, was much alarmed at

hearing a rustling in the "Bush" quite near her, and a repeated "Ba—a, ba—a!" We were told that the noise must have come from an ancient stag which is said to have haunted for years the range of rock near us. This mythical old fellow has, however, never been seen, even by the "oldest inhabitant."

Your brothers have now and then shot a chance partridge or wild-duck, but had to look for them, and the truth must be told that when settlers, gentle or simple, are engaged in the daily toil of grubbing, and as it were scratching the earth for bread, it is difficult to find a day's leisure for the gentlemanly recreation of shooting. Your youngest brother was pretty successful in trapping beaver and musk-rat, and in shooting porcupine; of the two former the skins can be sold to advantage, but as to eating their flesh, which some of our party succeeded in doing, your eldest brother and myself found

that impossible, and turned with loathing from the rich repasts prepared from what I irreverently termed vermin!

I must now tell you how our lots are situated with regard to each other. C——s, having come out a year before the rest of us, had secured two hundred acres of free grant land, one lot in his own name, and one in the maiden name of his present wife, who came out from England to marry him, under the chaperonage of your sister and her husband. This has enabled him, since the birth of his little boy, to claim and obtain another lot of a hundred acres, as "head of a family." His land is good, and prettily situated, with plenty of beaver meadow and a sprinkling of rock, and also a very picturesque waterfall, where, in coming years, he can have a mill. I have the adjoining hundred acres, good flat land for cultivation, but not so picturesque as any of the other lots, which I regret, though

others envy me the absence of rock. My land lies between C——s' and the two hundred acres belonging to your brother-in-law, whose very pretty situation I have already described.

I am sorry to say that the two hundred acres taken up before we came, for your eldest brother and sister, are at a distance of five miles from here; your brother, who went over to see about clearing a portion of them, says the landscape is most beautiful, as in addition to rock and wood there are good-sized lakes, which make the lots less valuable for cultivation, but far more beautiful to the eye.

When we had been here about three weeks, our young friend C. W. came to us from Montreal, where he had not succeeded in getting any situation, though he brought letters of introduction to Judge J. It is quite useless for young *gentlemen*, however

well educated, to come out from the "old country" expecting situations to be numerous and easily attainable; all introductions from friends of *yours* to friends of *theirs* are for the most part useless, unless indeed addressed to some commercial firm. The best and surest introduction a man can have is to be a steady and skilful workman at some trade, and then he can command employment.

To return to C. W. He arrived, in fact, in the dusk of a chilly evening, and was near losing his way in the "Bush," having to pass across my land, which was then almost untrodden. Fortunately as he advanced he betook himself to shouting, and luckily was heard and answered by C——s, who was just going indoors for the night. They soon met, and C——s took him home, and with him and your sister-in-law he boarded and lodged during the whole of his stay,

for at your sister's we were already overcrowded.

As the autumn advanced, we began most seriously to give our attention to building my log-house, hoping that I might settle my part of the family before the winter set in. Accordingly an acre of my land was cleared, and the logs for a house cut and prepared, a skilful workman being hired to help; and when all was ready, we called a "bee," and took care to provide everything of the best in the shape of provisions.

Our well-laid plan was a signal failure, partly because settlers do not like coming to a "bee" so late in the year (it was November), and partly because some of the invitations had been given on Sunday, which, as most of the settlers near us were Scotch and strict Presbyterians, caused offence. Only three people came, and they were thanked and dismissed.

The very next day (November 11th), snow-storms and hard winter weather began; but in spite of this our four gentlemen, seeing my deep disappointment at being kept waiting for a residence, most chivalrously went to work, and by their unassisted efforts and hard labour actually managed in the course of a fortnight to raise the walls and place the rafters of a log-house not much smaller than the others. Their work was the admiration of the whole settlement, and many expressed themselves quite ashamed of having thus left us in the lurch.

After raising the walls, however, they were reluctantly compelled to stop, for the severity of the weather was such, that shingling the roof, chinking, and mossing became quite impossible. As it was, E. nearly had his hands frost-bitten. We were thus compelled to remain with your sister till the spring of 1872. We greatly felt,

after we came into the Bush, the want of all religious ordinances; but we soon arranged a general meeting of all the members of the family on a Sunday at your sister's, when your brother-in-law read the Church of England service, and all joined in singing the chants and hymns. Sometimes he was unavoidably absent, as the clergymen at Bracebridge, knowing him to have taken his degree at St. John's College, Cambridge, and to be otherwise qualified, would ask his assistance, though a layman, to do duty for him at different stations in the district.

We found in our own neighbourhood a building set apart for use as a church, but too far off for us to attend either summer or winter. Here Church of England, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan ministers preached in turn, and thus some semblance of worship was kept up. I hardly dare describe the

miserable change we found in our employments and manner of life when we first settled down to hard labour in the Bush. It was anguish to me to see your sisters and sister-in-law, so tenderly and delicately brought up, working harder by far than any of our servants in England or France.

It is one thing to sit in a pretty drawing-room, to play, to sing, to study, to embroider, and to enjoy social and intellectual converse with a select circle of kind friends, and it is quite another thing to slave and toil in a log-house, no better than a kitchen, from morning till night, at cleaning, washing, baking, preparing meals for hungry men (not always of one's own family), and drying incessant changes of wet clothes.

I confess, to my shame, that my philosophy entirely gave way, and that for a long time I cried constantly. I also took to falling off my chair in fits of giddiness, which lasted for

a few minutes, and much alarmed the children, who feared apoplexy. I felt quite sure that it was from continual fretting, want of proper exercise, the heat of the stove, and inanition from not being able to swallow a sufficiency of the coarse food I so much disliked. Fortunately we had brought out some cases of arrow-root, and some bottles of Oxley's Essence of Ginger, and with the help of this nourishment, and walking resolutely up and down the clearing, where we kept a track swept for the purpose, I got better. Your eldest sister likewise had an alarming fit of illness, liver complaint and palpitation of the heart, doubtless brought on by poor food, hard work, and the great weight of the utensils belonging to the stove. I was much frightened, but after a time she, too, partially recovered; indeed we *had* to get well as best we might, for there was no doctor nearer than Bracebridge, eighteen

miles off, and had we sent for him, we had no means of paying either for visits or drugs.

Christmas Day at length drew near, and as we wished to be all together, though our funds were exceedingly low, dear C——s insisted on contributing to our Christmas-dinner. He bought a chicken from a neighbouring settler who, in giving him a *scare-crow*, did not forget to charge a good price for it. He sent it to us with some mutton. Your sister has told me since, that while preparing the chicken for cooking, she could have shed tears of disgust and compassion, the poor thing being so attenuated that its bones pierced through the skin, and had it not been killed, it must soon have died of consumption. In spite of this I roused my dormant energies, and with the help of butter, onions and spices, I concocted a savoury stew which was much applauded. We had also a pudding! Well, the less

said about that pudding the better. Nevertheless, I must record that it contained a *maximum* of flour and a *minimum* of currants and grease. The plums, sugar, spice, eggs, citron, and brandy were conspicuous by their absence. Still, the pudding was eaten — peace to its memory!

We all assembled on Christmas morning early, and had our Church service performed by your brother-in-law. Cruel memory took me back to our beloved little church in France, with its Christmas decorations of holly and evergreens, and I could almost hear the sweet voices of the choir singing my favourite hymn: "Hark! the herald angels sing!" There was indeed a sad contrast between the festive meetings of other years, when our little band was unbroken by death and separation, and when out of our abundance we could make others happy, and this forlorn gathering in a strange

land, with care written on every brow, poverty in all our surroundings, and deep though unexpressed anxiety lest all our struggles in this new and uncongenial mode of existence should prove fruitless. For the sake of others, I tried to simulate a cheerfulness I was far from feeling, and so we got over the evening. We had a good deal of general conversation, and some of our favourite songs were sung by the gentlemen.

It was late when our party broke up; your brother C——s with his wife and C. W. actually scrambled home through the forest by moonlight, a track having been broken by snow-shoes in the morning.

A great grief to me at this time was the long interval between writing letters to the "old country" and receiving the answers, an interval which my vivid imagination filled up with all kind of horrors

which *might* have happened to the dear ones we had left behind.

The close of the year silently came on, and I finish this letter with a "Sonnet to the Pines," my first composition in the Bush, written partly to convince myself that I was not quite out of my wits, but had still the little modicum of intellect I once possessed, and partly to reassure your brothers and sisters, who were always predicting that I should bring on softening of the brain by my unceasing regrets for the past, and gloomy prognostications for the future.

SONNET TO THE MUSKOKA PINES!

Weird monarchs of the forest! ye who keep
Your solemn watch betwixt the earth and sky;
I hear sad murmurs through your branches creep.
I hear the night-wind's soft and whispering sigh,
Warning ye that the spoiler's hand is nigh:
The surging wave of human life draws near!
The woodman's axe, piercing the leafy glade,
Awakes the forest-echoes far and near,

And startles in its haunts the timid deer,
Who seeks in haste some far-off friendly shade!
Nor drop ye stately Pines to earth alone.
The leafy train who shar'd your regal state—
Beech, Maple, Balsam, Spruce and Birch—lie prone,
And having grac'd your grandeur—share your fate!

LETTER IV.

NEW-YEAR'S Day of 1872 was one of those exceptionally beautiful days, when hope is generated in the saddest heart, and when the most pressing cares and anxieties retire for at least a time into the background of our lives. The sky was blue and clear, the sun bright, and the air quite soft and balmy for the time of year. We had had some bitter cold and gloomy weather, and we found the change most delightful. As in France we were in the habit of making presents among ourselves on this day, I looked over all my stores with a

view to keeping up the same pretty custom here; but alas! in the absence of all shops I was sorely puzzled. At last I made all right by giving pencils and paper for scribbling to the children; Eau de Cologne, sweet-scented soap, and pots of pomatum to the elders of the party; and finished off with a box of Bryant and May's "ruby matches" to C. W., who considered them a great acquisition. Your brother E. came over for the whole day. He now boarded and lodged with C——s, to make a little more room for your sister F.'s confinement, which we expected at the end of the month. I watched E. with delight as he felled an enormous birch tree in honour of the day; but though placed in perfect safety myself, I could not avoid a thrill of fear for him, as this monarch of the forest came crashing down. Fatal accidents very seldom occur, but new settlers, inexperienced and unused to the axe, sometimes

give themselves serious cuts. Your brother and brother-in-law have had many narrow escapes, but fortunately, as yet, are uninjured. Your brother C——s before we came gave himself a very severe cut, which prevented his chopping for some weeks. One of the settlers told your brother that when he first began chopping he had given himself a most dangerous wound, the axe having glanced from the tree on to his foot; for weeks after the accident he stood in a washing-tub for security while chopping his firewood. This account much amused us, and E——d made a neat little caricature of P. in his tub chopping.

I was greatly disappointed in the Canadian forest, and did not think it half as beautiful as I had been led to expect, for though there are certainly some very tall pines, and these of a considerable girth, yet being so closely packed together and hemmed in with small trees and a thick undergrowth of brushwood,

they always seem cramped, and their lofty tops unable to spread out to their full size. Hurricanes here are of frequent occurrence, and at these times it is not unusual for full half an acre of trees to be entirely laid flat, giving the greatest trouble to the settler when he wants to clear. At times the "windfall," as it is called, is a narrow belt of uprooted trees extending for miles, and distinctly marking the path of the hurricane through the forest. I was less astonished at the constant fall of the trees after examining an enormous pine lying on C——s' land, which was blown down last year. The roots of this tree seemed to have formed an enormous web or network under the surface of the ground, and only a few large fibres here and there appeared to have gone to any depth. I missed the umbrageous oaks, elms, and beeches of our own parks, and also the open forest glades which so greatly enhance

the beauty of our woodland scenery. I am told that the trees in the States are much larger and finer, but of this I am of course incompetent to judge, never having been there. The most beautiful tree here is certainly the "balsam," a slender, delicate tree whose feathery branches droop gracefully to within a few feet of the ground.

We found the winter fearfully cold, the thermometer being at times forty degrees below zero. We had great difficulty in keeping ourselves sufficiently clothed for such a season. All people coming to the Bush bring clothes far too good for the rough life they lead there. In coming out we had no means of providing any special outfit, and therefore brought with us only the ordinary wardrobes of genteel life. We soon found that all silks, delicate shawls, laces and ornaments, are perfectly useless here. Every article we possess of that kind is carefully put

away in our trunks, and will probably never see daylight again, unless indeed that, like Mrs. Katy Scudder in the "Minister's Wooing," we may occasionally air our treasures. What we found most useful was everything in the shape of woollen or other thick fabrics, winter dresses, warm plaid shawls, flannels, furs, etc.; of these we had a tolerable stock, and as the cold increased we put one thing over another till we must have often presented the appearance of feather-beds tied in the middle with a string. Indeed, as our gentlemen politely phrased it, we made complete "guys" of ourselves, and I must say that they were not one whit behind us in grotesque unsightliness of costume. Your brothers sometimes wore four or five flannels one over the other, thick jerseys and heavy overcoats when not actually at work, and pairs upon pairs of thick woollen socks and stockings, with great sea-boots drawn over all;

or in deep snow "moccasins" or else "shoe-packs," the first being made by the Indians of the skin of the moose-deer, and the second mostly of sheep-skins. The great mart for these articles is at the Indian settlement of "Lachine" on the St. Lawrence, near Montreal. They also wore snow-shoes, which are not made like the Laplanders' with skates attached for sliding, but simply for walking on the surface of the deep snow. They consist of a framework of wood three feet long by one and a half wide, filled up with strips of raw deer-skin interlaced, and in shape resembling a fish, more like a monstrous sole than any other. We ladies, too, were thankful to lay aside our French kid boots and delicate slippers, and to wrap our feet and legs up so completely that they much resembled mill-posts. Had you or any of our dear friends seen us in our Esquimaux costume, you would certainly have failed to

recognise the well-dressed ladies and gentlemen you had been in the habit of seeing. To crown all, your brother-in-law and C——s had goat-skin coats brought from France, real Robinson Crusoe coats, such as are worn by the French shepherds, and these they found invaluable. We were very sorry that E——d had not one likewise.

Our occupations were manifold; hard work was the order of the day-for every one but me; but all the work I was allowed to do was the cooking, for which I consider that I have a special vocation. A great compliment was once paid me by an old Indian officer in our regiment, who declared that Mrs. K. could make a good curry, he was sure, out of the sole of a shoe!

At other times I read, wrote letters, and plied my knitting-needles indefatigably, to the great advantage of our little colony, in the shape of comforters, baby-socks, mittens,

Canadian sashes and petticoats for the little children. Sometimes I read to the children out of their story-books, but *their* happiest time was when they could get your sister P——e to give them an hour or two in the evening of story-telling. You know what a talent she possesses for composing, both in prose and verse, stories for little people, and with these she would keep them spell-bound, to the great comfort of the elders of the party, and of their poor mother especially, who towards night felt much fatigued.

Dear children! they required some amusement after the close confinement of the winter's day. Meanwhile the gentlemen were busy from morning till night chopping down trees in readiness for burning in spring. This is mostly done in mid-winter, as they are reckoned to chop more easily then.

You must not suppose that all this time we had no visitors. By degrees many of the

settlers scattered over the neighbourhood came to see us, some, doubtless, from kindly motives, others from curiosity to know what the strangers were like. I found some of them pleasant and amusing, particularly those who had been long in the country, and who could be induced to give me some of their earlier Bush experiences. A few of them seemed to possess a sprinkling of higher intelligence, which made their conversation really interesting.

One very picturesque elderly man, tall, spare, and upright, came to fell some pine-trees contiguous to the house, which much endangered its safety when the hurricanes, so frequent in this country, blew. He had begun life as a ploughboy on a farm in my beloved county of Kent, and had the unmistakable Kentish accent. It seemed so strange to me at first, to be shaking hands and sitting at table familiarly with one of a

class so different from my own; but this was my first initiation into the free-and-easy intercourse of all classes in this country, where the standing proverb is, "Jack is as good as his master!"

I found all the settlers kindly disposed towards us, and most liberal in giving us a share of their flower-seeds, plants, and garden produce, which, as new-comers, we could not be supposed to have. They were willing also to accept in return such little civilities as we could offer, in the shape of books and newspapers from the old country, and sometimes medicines and drugs, which could not be got in the settlement. There might be a little quarrelling, backbiting, and petty rivalry among them, with an occasional dash of slanderous gossip; but I am inclined to think not more than will inevitably be found in small communities.

As a body, they certainly are hard-work-

ing, thrifty, and kind-hearted. Almost universally they seem contented with their position and prospects. I have seldom met with a settler who did not think his own land the finest in the country, who had not grown the *largest turnip ever seen*, and who was not full of hope that the coveted railway would certainly pass through his lot.

At this time I felt an increasing anxiety about your sister's confinement, which was now drawing near. That such an event should take place in this desolate wilderness, where we had no servants, no monthly-nurse, and not even a doctor within reach, was sufficiently alarming. To relieve my mind, your brother-in-law went about the neighbourhood, and at last found a very respectable person, a settler's wife, not more than three miles off, who consented to be our assistant on this momentous occasion, and he

promised to go for her as soon as dear F——e should be taken ill.

We had been made a little more comfortable in the house, as your brother-in-law and brother had made a very tolerable ceiling over our bed-places, and your brother had chopped and neatly piled up at the end of the room an immense stock of fire-wood, which prevented the necessity of so often opening the door.

We felt now more than ever the want of fresh meat, as the children could not touch the salt pork, and were heartily tired of boiled rice and dumplings, which were all the variety we could give them, with the exception of an occasional egg. In this emergency your brother C——s consented to sell me a bull calf, which he intended bringing up, but having also a cow and a heifer, and fearing to run short of fodder, he consented to part with him. Thus I became

the fortunate possessor of an animal which, when killed, fully realised my misgivings as to its being neither veal nor beef, but in a transition state between the two. It had a marvellous development of bone and gristle, but very little flesh; still we made much of it in the shape of nourishing broth and savoury stews, and as I only paid seven dollars for it, and had long credit, I was fully satisfied with my first Bush speculation.

The 18th of January arrived. The day had been very cold, with a drifting, blinding snow; towards evening a fierce, gusty wind arose, followed by pitch darkness. The forest trees were cracking and crashing down in all directions. We went to bed. At two a.m., having been long awake, I heard a stir in the room, and dear F.'s voice asking us to get up. What my feelings were I leave you to imagine — to send for help three

miles off, in such a night, was impossible, for even with a lantern your brother-in-law could not have ventured into the Bush. Fortunately, we had no time to be frightened or nervous. We removed the sleeping children to our own bed, made the most comfortable arrangement circumstances would admit of for dear F——e, and about three a.m., that is to say, in less than an hour after being called, our first Bush baby was born, a very fine little girl.

Your sister P——e, who had been reading up for the occasion, did all that was necessary, with a skill, coolness and self-possession which would have done honour to "Dr. *Elizabeth Black!*"

I did indeed feel thankful when I saw my child safe in bed, with her dear baby-girl, washed, dressed, and well bundled up in flannel, lying by her side, she herself taking a basin of gruel which I joyfully pre-

pared for her. God "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

We could well believe this when we found your sister recover even more quickly than she had done in France, where she had so many more comforts and even luxuries; nor was she this time attacked by ague and low fever, from which she had always suffered before.

This sudden call upon our energies made me glad that my wandering life in the army had rendered me very independent of extraneous help, and that I had taught you all from childhood never to call a servant for what you could easily do with your own hands. The very first thing people *must* learn in the Bush, is to trust in God, and to help themselves, for other help is mostly too far off to be available.

At the end of this month, when I felt that I could safely leave dear F——e, I deter-

mined to go to B——e and sign for my land. The not having done so before had long been a cause of great anxiety.

I had been more than four months in the country, had begun to clear and to build upon my lot, and yet from various causes had not been able to secure it by signing the necessary papers. These having been sent to France, and having missed me, had been duly forwarded here. Till the signing was completed, I was liable at any moment to have my land taken up by some one else. Accordingly your brother wrote to B—— for a cutter and horse, and directed the driver to come as far into the Bush as he could.

We started on a very bright, cold morning, but I had walked fully three miles before we met our sledge, which was much behind time. I never enjoyed anything in the country so much as this my first sleighing

expedition. The small sleigh, or cutter as it is sometimes called, held only one, and I was nestled down in the bottom of it, well wrapped up, and being delightfully warm and snug, could enjoy looking at the very picturesque country we were rapidly passing through. I did, however, most sincerely pity your brother and the driver, who nearly perished, for sitting on the front seat they caught all the wind, which was piercing. We stopped midway at a small tavern, where we dined, and I can truly say that in spite of the dirty table-cloth and the pervading slovenliness and disorder of the house and premises, I found everything enjoyable, and above all the sense of being for a few hours at least freed from my long imprisonment in the woods.

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at B——e, where we went to the N. A. Hotel, and were made very comfort-

able by its kind mistress. The next morning at ten a.m. we went to the magistrate's office, where I signed for my one hundred acres, and of course came away with the conscious dignity of a landed proprietor.

I was charmed with the kind and courteous manners of Mr. L——s. He reminded me more of that nearly extinct race—the gentleman of the old school—than any one I had seen since leaving England. His son, who is his assistant, seems equally amiable and popular. Seeing from my manner that I considered Muskoka, even at the present time, as the *Ultima Thule* of civilisation, he told us some amusing anecdotes of what it had actually been when his grandfather first became a settler in Canada. The towns and villages now called the "Front," had then no existence; all was thick forest, no steamers on the lakes, no roads of any kind,

and barely here and there a forest-track made by Indians or trappers. From where his grandfather settled down, it was sixty miles to the nearest place where anything could be got, and the first year he had to go all this distance on foot for a bushel of seed potatoes for planting, and to return with them in a sack which he carried on his back the whole way.

We left B——e to return home at one p.m., but it was nearly dark when we turned into the Bush, and quite so when we were put down at the point from which we had to walk home. Here we were luckily met by your brother C——s and C. W., with a lantern and a rope for our parcels, according to promise. C——s took charge of me, and led the way with the lantern. I tried to follow in his steps, but the track was so narrow, and the light so uncertain, that I found myself, every few moments, up to my

knees in soft snow, if I diverged only a step from the track.

I became almost unable to go on, but after many expedients had been tried, one only was found to answer. C——s tied a rope round my waist, and then round his own, and in this safe, but highly ignominious manner, I was literally towed through the forest, and reached home thoroughly exhausted, but I am bound to say almost as much from laughter as from fatigue. I found all well, and the children were highly pleased with the little presents I had brought for them.

LETTER V.

THE first months of this year found us very anxious to get the log-house finished, which had been so well begun by our four gentlemen, and as soon as the weather moderated a little, and our means allowed us to get help, we had it roofed, floored, chinked, and mossed. It was necessary to get it finished, so that we might move before the great spring thaw should cover the forest-paths with seas of slush and mud, and before the creek between us and our domicile should be swollen so as to render it impassable for ladies.

When the workmen had finished, we sent to the nearest town for a settler's stove; and as the ox-team we hired could bring it no farther than the corner of the concession road which skirts one end of my lot, your brothers had the agreeable task of bringing it piecemeal on their backs, with all its heavy belongings, down the precipitous side of my gully, wading knee-deep through the creek at the bottom, and scrambling up the side nearest here. It was quite a service of danger, and I felt truly thankful that no accident occurred.

About this time our young friend C. W. left us, and we were very sorry to lose him, for more particularly in "Bush" life the taking away of one familiar face leaves a sad blank behind. He could not, however, make up his mind to remain, finding the life very dull and cheerless, and suffering moreover most severely from the cold of the climate.

He went to Toronto, and at last got a tolerably good situation in a bank, where his thorough knowledge of French and German made him very useful.

Another important event also took place, and this was the christening of our dear little "Bush" girl, who by this time was thriving nicely. Our Church of England clergyman at B——e very kindly came over to perform the ceremony, but as no special day had been named, his visit took us by surprise, and the hospitality we were able to extend to him was meagre indeed. This christening certainly presented a marked contrast to our last. It was no well-dressed infant in a richly-embroidered robe and French lace cap like a cauliflower ring, that I handed to our good minister, but a dear little soft bundle of rumpled flannel, with just enough of face visible to receive the baptismal sprinkling.

We all stood round in our anomalous costumes, and a cracked slop-basin represented the font. Nevertheless, our little darling behaved incomparably well, and all passed off pleasantly. With our minister afterwards, a very kind and gentlemanly man, we had an hour's pleasant conversation, which indeed was quite a treat, for in the Bush, with little or no time for intellectual pursuits, for the practice of any elegant accomplishment, or indeed for anything but the stern and hard realities of daily labour; conversation even among the well-educated is apt to degenerate into discussions about "crops" and "stock," and the relative merits of *timothy* or *beaver hay*.

We saw but little of your brother Edward at this time, for he was fully occupied in the log-house, where he lit a large fire every day that it might be thoroughly aired for our reception, and then engaged in carpentering

extensively for our comfort. He put up numerous shelves for the crockery and kitchen things, made two very good and substantial bedsteads, a sofa fixed against the wall which we call the "daïs," and a very comfortable easy-chair with a flexible seat of strips of cowhide interlaced—an ingenious device of your brother Charles, who made one for his wife.

At last the house being finished, quite aired enough, and otherwise made as comfortable as our very slender means would permit, we resolved to move, and on the 7th of April we took our departure from dear F——s, who, however glad to have more room for the children, sadly missed our companionship, as we did hers. The day of our exodus was very clear and bright, and the narrow snow-track between our lots was still tolerably hard and safe, though the great thaw had begun, and the deep un-

trodden snow on either side of the track was fast melting, and every careless step we took plunged us into two or three feet of snow, from which we had to be ignominiously dragged out. It was worse when we sank into holes full of water, and the narrow path treacherously giving way at the edges, we had many of these falls. All our trunks, chests, and barrels had to be left at F——s', and we only took with us packages that could be carried by hand, and our bedding, which was conveyed on the shoulders of the gentlemen.

Of course we travelled in Indian file, one after the other.

When we finally departed, your brother-in-law and Sister P——e preceded me, laden with all manner of small articles, and every few yards down they came. I followed with a stout stick which helped me along considerably, and as I was not allowed to carry

anything, and picked my way very carefully, I managed to escape with comparatively few falls, and only two of any consequence, one when I pitched forward with my face down flat on the ground, and another when my feet suddenly slipped from under me and sent me backwards, rolling over and over in the snow before, even with help, I could get up. The effects of this fall I felt for a long time.

At length we arrived at our new home, but in spite of the magic of that word, I felt dreadfully depressed, and as we were all thoroughly wet and weary, and on looking out of the windows in front saw nothing but a wall of snow six feet deep, which encircled the house and quite hid the clearing from our eyes, I need not say that we were anything but a gay party. Your kind brother-in-law, to console me a little, went home and brought back in his arms, as a present for me, the little cat of which I had been so

fond at his house. I cheered up immediately, and had so much trouble to prevent little Tibbs from running away and being lost in the snow, that it was quite an occupation for me. One member of our party made himself at home at once, and from the moment of our entrance took possession of the warmest place before the stove. This was dear old Nero, who, as a "French seigneur," had great privileges, was much admired in the settlement, and was always called the "Frenchman!" His chief delight seemed to be incessantly barking at the squirrels.

The thaw continuing, we were quite prisoners for some weeks, and as to our property left at your sister's, it was nearly three months before we could get it, as your brother-in-law with your brothers had to cut a path for the oxen between our clearings, and to make a rough bridge over his creek, which, though not so deep as the one on my

land, was equally impassable for a wagon and team.

Happy would it have been for us, and for all the new settlers, if, when the snow was quite melted, which was not till the second week in May, fine dry weather had ensued. This would have enabled us to log and burn the trees felled during the winter, and to clear up the ground ready for cropping. Instead of this, drenching rain set in, varied by occasional thunder-storms, so that even after the logging was done it was June before we could venture to fire the heaps, the ground being still quite wet, and even then the clearing was such a partial one that by the 15th of June we had only three-fourths of an acre thoroughly ready, and on this your brother planted eight bushels of potatoes, happily for us regardless of the prognostics of our neighbours, who all assured him that he was much too late to have any chance of a return.

He had, however, an excellent yield of eighty bushels, which fully repaid him for his perseverance and steady refusal to be wet-blanketed. He also, however late, sowed peas, French beans, vegetable-marrows, and put in cabbages, from all of which we had a good average crop.

We had, of course, to hire men for our logging, with their oxen, and to find their meals. I could not but observe how well they all behaved, washing their faces and hands before sitting down to table, and also scrupulously refraining from swearing, smoking, or spitting, while in the house. A man who hires himself and his oxen out for the day, has two dollars and food for himself and his beasts; and should he bring any assistants, they each have seventy-five cents and their food. You should have seen the gentlemen of our party after a day's logging! They were black from head to foot, and more

resembled master chimney-sweeps than anything else. Most of the settlers have a regular logging-suit made of coarse coloured stuff; anything better is sure to be spoiled during such work.

Our fire, though a bad one, was very picturesque. It did not burn fiercely enough to clear off the log-heaps still wet from the late rains, but it ran far back into the forest, and many of the tall trees, particularly the decaying ones, were burning from bottom to top, and continued in flames for some days and nights. During the logging I sincerely pitied the poor oxen, who are yoked together and attached by a heavy chain to one immense log after another, till they are all brought into position, and the log-heaps are arranged for burning. It is most distressing to see these patient animals panting after their exertions, and too often, I regret to say, beaten and sworn at in a most outrageous manner.

Great care is required to prevent accidents during logging, and fatal ones sometimes occur. I was in conversation with the reeve of an adjoining township this summer, and he told me that two years ago he lost his eldest son, a young man of great promise, in this melancholy way. The poor fellow made a false step while driving his team, and fell right before the oxen who were coming on with a heavy log, quite a tree, attached to them. Before it was possible to stop them, they had drawn the tree over him and he was literally crushed to death.

Not having been able to get the land ready for corn of any kind, and our only crops being the potatoes I have mentioned, and a few garden vegetables, your brother thought it best to give his whole attention to fencing our clearing all round, and putting gates at the three different points of egress. This was the more necessary as your brother

Charles had a cow and heifer with a large circle of acquaintances among our neighbour's cattle, who came regularly every morning to fetch them away into the Bush, where they all fed till night. Your brother made three gates on the model of French ones, which are both solid and simple in their construction, easy to open and easy to shut.

Wonderful to say, some of the old settlers condescended to admire these novelties. Your brother Charles worked with him till this necessary labour was concluded, and we were glad enough when our four and a half acres were securely protected from the daily inroads of stray cattle. Before the fence was up, your sister and I spent half our time in running out with the broom to drive away the neighbour's cattle, and protect our cherished cabbage plants, and the potatoes just coming up. Two audacious steers in particular, called Jim and Charlie, used to

come many times during the day, trot round the house, drink up every drop of soapy water in the washing-tubs, and if any linen was hanging on the lines to dry, would munch it till driven away.

Two oxen and two or three cows used to come early every morning, and cross our clearing to fetch their friends from your brother Charles'. We used to hear the ox-bells, and after they had passed some time would see them returning in triumph with Crummie and the heifer, and after your brother-in-law got a cow, they would go for Dolly likewise, and then the whole party would go off and feed together in the Bush till night.

Fortunately, all the cattle in this part wear bells to prevent their being lost. One day your sister and I went to bring F——e and the children back to tea, when suddenly her own cow, Mistress Dolly, with

a neighbour's oxen called Blindy and Bald-face, came rushing down the path we were in, and we had just time, warned by the bells, to scramble out of the way with the children and get behind some trees, while F——e, always courageous and active, drove them in an opposite direction.

The being able to turn the cattle (a settler's riches) into the Bush during the whole summer, and thus to feed them free of all expense, is a great boon to the settler; but this Bush-feeding has its disadvantages, for the cattle will sometimes stray with what companions they gather on the road, miles and miles away, to the great discomfort of their masters who have to hunt for them.

All through the past summer, after his hard day's work, we used to see your youngest brother pass with a rope in one hand and his milk-pail in the other, from our clearing into the Bush, to look for

Crummie and the heifer. Sometimes he would return with them, but much oftener we had to go without the milk he supplied us with, as Crummie would be heard of far away at some distant farm, and occasionally she and her companion strayed as far as the Muskoka Road, many miles off, which of course necessitated great loss of time and much fatigue the next day in hunting her up. Both your brothers and your brother-in-law are excellent at making their way through the Bush, and as each carries a pocket-compass, are in little danger of being lost.

Just before we came here the whole settlement had to turn out in search of a settler's wife, who had gone to look for her cow one fine afternoon with two of her own children and two of a neighbour's, who coveted the pleasant scrambling walk, and the chance of berry-picking. As evening came on and they did not return, much alarm was felt; and

when the night had passed, it was thought best to call out all the men in the immediate neighbourhood. Accordingly twenty men were soon mustered, headed by a skilful trapper, who has been many years here, and knows the Bush well. They made a "trapper's line," which means placing the men in a straight line at considerable distances from each other, and so beating the Bush in all directions as they advance, shouting and firing off their guns continually. At length, towards the afternoon, the trapper himself came upon the poor woman and the four children, not many miles from her home, sitting under a tree, utterly exhausted by hunger, fatigue, and incessant screaming for help. Her account was, that she had found her cow at some distance from home, had milked her, and then tried to return, but entirely forgot the way she came, and after trying one opening after another became utterly bewildered.

The forest in summer is so unvarying that nothing is easier than to go astray. As night came on, she divided the can of milk among the poor, hungry, crying children, and at length, tired out, they all slept under a large tree, the night providentially being fine and warm. In the morning they renewed their fruitless efforts, getting farther and farther astray, till at length they had sunk down incapable of longer exertion, and unable to stir from the spot where they were found.

I conclude this letter with remarking, that instead of the spring which I fondly anticipated, we burst at once from dull gloomy weather and melting snow, to burning hot summer and clouds of mosquitoes and flies of all kinds

LETTER VI.

SUMMER and mosquitoes! Inseparable words in Canada, except in the large towns, where their attacks are hardly felt.

In the Bush, the larger the clearing the fewer the mosquitoes. It is, above all things, desirable to avoid building a log-house near swampy ground, for there they will be found in abundance.

We have four acres and a half quite clear, but unfortunately our log-house, instead of being placed in the middle, is at one end, with a well-wooded hill and a portion of dense

forest at the back and at one end; delicious retreat for our enemies, from whence they issued in myriads, tormenting us from morning till night, and all night long.

This Egyptian plague began in the end of May, and lasted till the end of September. We being new-comers they were virulent in their attacks, and we were bitten from head to foot; in a short time we felt more like lepers than healthy, clean people, and the want of sleep at night was most trying to us all, after our hard work. Our only resource was keeping large "smudges" continually burning in pans. These "smudges" are made of decayed wood, called "punk," and smoulder and smoke without flaming.

When I went to bed at night (my only time for reading) I used to turn a long trunk end upwards close to my bolster, and place a large pan of "punk" on it, so that myself and my book were well enveloped in smoke.

Many times in the night we had to renew our pans, and from the first dawn of day the buzzing of these hateful insects, who seem then to acquire fresh liveliness, prevented all chance of sleep. Nor were the mosquitoes our only foes. Flies of all kinds swarmed around us, and one in particular, the deer-fly, was a long black fly frightful to look at, from its size and ugliness. Still, as the flies did not circle about in the air as the mosquitoes did, we could better defend ourselves against them.

We derived little or no benefit from the numerous remedies recommended by different settlers. In one only I found some alleviation—a weak solution of carbolic acid, which certainly deadened the irritation, and was at least a clean remedy compared with the "fly-oil" with which most of the settlers besmear themselves unsparingly.

Towards the end of June I entered upon

an entirely new phase of Bush-life, which was anything but pleasant to a person of a nervous, susceptible temperament. This was my being in perfect solitude for many hours of every day. Your sister-in-law expected her first confinement, and we were so anxious that she should have proper medical advice, that it was thought advisable to place her in lodgings at B——e till the important event took place. Her brother coming to pay her a visit entirely agreed in the necessity of the case, and as he kindly smoothed away the money difficulty it was carried into execution. She could not go alone, and therefore your eldest sister accompanied her, and thus I lost for a time my constant and only companion.

I undertook now to keep house for both your brothers, as in his wife's absence Charles could have little comfort at home. I only saw them at meal-times, and though your eldest brother came home always before dusk, yet

I could not but be very nervous at being so much alone.

The weather became so hot, that the stove was moved into the open air at the back of the house, and to save me fatigue your brother cut a doorway at the back, close to where the stove was placed. Unfortunately there was a great press of work at this time, and moreover no lumber on the premises, and therefore no door could be made, and the aperture, which I had nothing large enough to block up, remained all the summer, to my great discomfiture.

At first I was not so very solitary, for a settler's daughter, who had worked for your sister-in-law, came to me three times a week, and went on the alternate days to your sister F——e. We liked her very well, were very kind to her, and under our training she was learning to be quite a good servant, when an incident occurred which occasioned our dis-

missing her, which gave me great pain, and which has never been cleared up to my satisfaction.

Our poor dog Nero, who was an excellent guard, and quite a companion, was taken ill, and we fancied that he had been bitten by a snake in Charles' beaver meadow, where he had been with your brothers who were haymaking. We nursed him most tenderly, you may be sure, but he got worse and worse suffered agonies, and in less than a week I was obliged to consent to our old favourite dog being shot. He was taken from my bed well wrapped up, so that he knew nothing of what was coming, while I walked far away into the wood, and your brother with one shot put the faithful animal out of his pain. Two days before he died a large piece of poisoned meat was found near the pathway of our clearing, and as from before the time of his being ill no one but this servant girl

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had gone backwards and forwards, as her father had a kind of grudge against your brother for driving his cattle off the premises, and as she never expressed the slightest sympathy for the poor beast, but seemed quite pleased when he was dead, we could not but fear that she had been made the medium of killing him. We found that he had been poisoned with blue vitriol, but we knew this too late to save him.

We buried him honourably, and I planted a circle of wild violets round his grave, and was not ashamed to shed many tears besides, which was a well-deserved tribute to our old and faithful *friend.*

After the girl was dismissed I found more than enough of occupation, for though your brother made and baked the bread, which I was not strong enough to do, yet I cooked, washed for them, and did the house-work, which I found sufficiently fatiguing, and was

very glad after dinner to sit down to my writing-table, which I took good care to place so as to face the open door, never feeling safe to have it at my back.

Your dear sister F. was so kind, that at great inconvenience to herself, on account of the heat and the flies in the forest, she managed to come nearly every day at four p.m. with the children, and remained till your brother came back for the night.

He was occupied for many weeks in making hay with your brother and brother-in-law in the beaver meadow, a large one and very productive. They make a great deal of hay, and put it up in large cocks, but a great deal of it was lost by rotting on the ground, from not being carried away in proper time. The delay was occasioned by none of us having oxen of our own, and from not having the means of hiring till the season was passed.

The not getting money at the proper epochs

for work is the greatest drawback to the new settler. If it comes too soon it is apt to melt away in the necessities of daily life; if it comes too late he must wait for another year.

I fully realised during this summer, that solitude in the Bush is not privacy. Though in case of any accident I was out of reach of all human help, yet I was liable at any moment of the day to have some passing settler walk coolly in, and sit down in my very chair if I had vacated it for a moment. I got one fright which I shall not easily forget. I had given your two brothers their breakfast, and they had started for their hay-making in the distant beaver meadow. I had washed up the breakfast-things, cleared everything away, and was arranging my hair in the glass hanging in the bed-place, the curtain of which was undrawn on account of the heat. My parting look in the glass disclosed a not very prepossessing face in the doorway behind, belonging

to a man who stood there immovable as a statue, and evidently enjoying my discomfiture.

I greeted him with a scream, which was almost a yell, and advanced pale as a ghost, having the agreeable sensation of all the blood in my body running down to my toes! His salutation was:

"Wall, I guess I've skeered you some!"

"Yes!" I replied, "you startled me very much."

He then came in and sat down. I sat down too, and we fell into quite an easy flow of talk about the weather, the crops, etc.

How devoutly I wished him anywhere else, and how ill I felt after my fright, I need not say, but I flatter myself that nothing of this appeared on the surface; all was courtesy and politeness.

At length he went way, and finding your brother in the beaver meadow, took care to

inform him that he "had had quite a pleasant chat with his old woman!"

I knew this man by sight, for once in the early part of the summer he came to inquire where Charles lived? On my pointing out the path, and saying in my politest manner,

"You will have no difficulty, sir, in finding Mr. C. K.'s clearing," he coolly replied:

"I guess I shall find it; I knows your son well; *we always calls him Charlie!*"

I had visitors during the summer, who were much more welcome. Two nice intelligent little boys with bare feet and shining faces, the children of an American from the "States," settled in the Muskoka Road, used to come twice a week with milk, eggs, and baskets of the delicious wild raspberry at five cents a quart. While they were resting and refreshing themselves with cold tea and bread-and-butter we used to have quite pleasant conversations. They were very confi-

dential, told me how anxiously they were expecting a grandmother, of whom they were very fond, and who was coming to live with them; of their progress and prizes in the Sunday-school some miles from here, which they regularly attended; of their garden and of many other little family matters; and when I gave them some story-books for children, and little tracts, they informed me that they would be kept for Sunday reading. They never failed, with the things they brought for sale, to bring me as a present a bunch of beautiful sweet-peas and mignonette, and occasionally a scarlet gladiolus.

When they were gone I used to sit down to my letter-writing; and after all my grubbing and house-work, I felt quite elevated in the social scale to have a beautiful bouquet on my writing-table, which I took care to arrange with a background of delicate fern leaves and dark, slender sprigs of the ground-hemlock.

The very smell of the flowers reminded me of my beloved transatlantic home, with its wealth of beautiful plants and flowering shrubs, and every room decorated with vases of lovely flowers which I passed some delicious morning hours in collecting and arranging.

When the fruit season had passed, I lost my little visitors, but was painfully reminded of them at the beginning of the winter. Your brother-in-law was called upon, in the absence of the clergyman, to read the burial service over an old lady who had died suddenly in the settlement. This was the grandmother of my poor little friends. She had always expressed a wish to spend her last days with her daughter in Muskoka, but put off her journey from the "States" till the weather was so severe that she suffered much while travelling, and arrived with a very bad cold. The second morning after

her arrival she was found dead in her bed.

I remained all the summer strictly a prisoner at home. The not being able to shut up the log-house for want of the second door of course prevented my leaving home, even for an hour; for the Bush is not Arcadia, and however primitive the manners and customs may be, I have failed to recognise primitive innocence among its inhabitants.

As to the berry-picking, which is the favourite summer amusement here, I would sooner have gone without fruit than have ventured into the swamps and beaver meadows, where the raspberries, huckleberries, and cranberries abound. My fear of snakes was too overpowering. Charles killed this summer no less than seven; and though we are told that in this part of Canada they are perfectly innocuous, yet your brother pointed

out that three out of the seven he killed had the flat conformation of head which betokens a venomous species.

In the meantime our news from B——e was not too good. After a residence in the lodgings of five weeks, your sister-in-law had been confined of a dear little boy, and at first all had gone well, but after a week she became very ill, and also the baby; and as he had to be brought up by hand, and there was great difficulty in getting pure, unmixed milk in B——e, it was thought better, when he was five weeks old, to bring the whole party back. That memorable journey must be reserved for another letter.

I noticed this summer many times the curious appearance of our clearing by moonlight. In the day the stumps stood out in all their naked deformity, as we had no "crops of golden grain" to hide them; but at night I never beheld anything more weird and

ghostly. The trees being mostly chopped in the winter, with deep snow on the ground, the stumps are left quite tall, varying from five to seven feet in height. When these are blackened by the burning, which runs all over the clearing, they present in the dim light the appearance of so many spectres. I could almost fancy myself in the cemetery in the Dunkirk Road, near Calais, and that the blackened stumps were hideous black crosses which the French are so fond of erecting in their churchyards.

They have in America a machine called a "stump-extractor;" but this is very expensive. By the decay of nature, it is possible, in two or three years, to drag out the stumps of trees with oxen; but the pine stumps never decay under seven or eight years, and during all that time are a perpetual blot on the beauty of the landscape.

I was much interested in a sight, novel to

me, namely, the fire-flies flitting about in the tops of the tall trees. They seemed like so many glittering stars, moving so fast that the sight became quite dazzled. In the cold weather, too, the aurora borealis is most beautiful; and it is well worth being a little chilly to stand out and watch the soft tints melting one into the other, and slowly vanishing away. But for these occasional glimpses of beauty and sublimity, I should indeed have found existence in the Bush intolerably prosaic.

I very much missed the flocks of birds I was accustomed to in Europe; but as I always forbade any gun being fired off in my clearing, I soon made acquaintance with some. It was a treat to me to watch two audacious woodpeckers, who would come and nibble at my stumps, and let me stand within a few feet of them without the least fear. There was also a pretty snow-bird, which

knew me so well that it would wait till I threw out crumbs and bits of potato for it; and once, when we had some meat hanging in a bag on the side of the house, which your brother tied up tightly to prevent depredation, this sagacious creature perched on the shed near, and actually looked me into untying the bag, and pulling partly out a piece of the pork, upon which it set to work with such goodwill, that in a few days some ounces of fat had disappeared.

LETTER VII.

ALL journeys to and from the Bush are prosecuted under such difficulties, that it is very fortunate they are few and far between. Indeed, few of the better class of settlers would remain, but for the near prospect of Government granting roads in the township, and the more distant one of the different companies for buying the pine-wood bridging over the deep gullies on the lots to facilitate their taking away the timber. When one of the expectant members for Muskoka paid us, in the course of the summer, an election visit,

this was the point on which we mainly insisted. Our courteous visitor promised everything; but as his subsequent election was declared null and void, we have as yet reaped no benefit from his promises.

Towards the end of August, I was compelled to pay my half-yearly visit to B——e, for the purpose of getting my pension-lists signed and duly forwarded. Your brother likewise had to take in two settlers in the vicinity, to swear off some land before taking it up. At first we thought of making our way to the post-office, three miles off, and from thence taking places in the mail-cart; but as we had to take in our settlers, and to pay all their expenses to and from B——e, your brother thought it best to send to the town for a wagon and team expressly for ourselves. This arrived; but, alas! in the afternoon instead of the morning, which had been specially mentioned.

On this day we fully proved the glorious uncertainty of the Canadian climate. The morning had been lovely, but towards three p.m. a soft, drizzling rain began to fall, which increased in volume and power till it became a drenching torrent.

Your brother-in-law took charge of me, and assisted me in scrambling over the different gullies; but by the time I considered it safe to get into the wagon, I was already wet through. The horses were so tired, having come from a distant journey, that we travelled very slowly, and it was dark when we drew up at the half-way house, where we were to have tea and to rest the poor animals. Here we remained for two hours; and when we again started it was pitch dark, with torrents of rain still falling, and the addition of occasional peals of thunder and flashes of lightning.

I have heard and read much of the tropical

rains of India and other southern countries, but it would be impossible to imagine a more persistent drenching than we got on this unlucky afternoon. The whole eight miles from the half-way house the horses could only walk very slowly, the night being unusually dark. We greatly need in this country such a law as they have in France, where it is enacted, under a heavy penalty, that no carriage, cart, or wagon shall travel after dark without carrying a good and sufficient light to prevent dangerous collisions. I should have been very nervous but for my implicit faith in the sagacity of the horses, and the great care of the driver, whom we only knew under his sobriquet of "Canadian Joe." He was a quiet, careful man, a French Canadian, who beguiled the way by singing very sweetly, and with whom it was pleasant to converse in the language we loved so well. He took us safely into B——e, with the ad-

dition to our party of two travellers we overtook on the road, and upon whom we had compassion.

When we got in, the hotel was about closing for the night; the fires were out, and the landlady had gone to bed ill; but the master bestirred himself, showed me to a comfortable bedroom, and made me some negus, which your brother, himself wet to the skin, soon brought me, and which at least warmed me a little after so many hours of exposure to cold and wet.

The next morning, as soon as we could get into thoroughly-dried clothes, we went to see our invalids. Your poor sister-in-law was still suffering much, but her dear baby (a very minute specimen of humanity) was improving, and, after more than two months' absence, I was thankful to see your sister only looking very pale, and not, as I expected, utterly worn out by her arduous

duties and compulsory vigils and anxieties. Your brother was obliged to return to the Bush on Saturday; but I remained to come home with your sister and sister-in-law the next week.

In the meantime, having been to the magistrate's office and transacted all our business, I greatly enjoyed with your brother walking about the neighbourhood. It was, indeed, a treat to walk on a good road, and to see signs of life and progress everywhere, instead of the silent monotony of the forest.

We noticed an amazing change for the better in this "rising village of the Far West," which we had not seen for six months. The hotels and stores seemed to have quadrupled themselves, good frame-houses were springing up in every direction, and a very pretty little church, since opened for Church of England service, was nearly finished. These lumber-houses are very ugly at first, on ac-

count of the yellow hue of the wood; but this is soon toned down by exposure to the weather, and climbing-plants and pretty gardens soon alter their appearance, and make them picturesque.

The dull, primitive life of the Bush certainly prepares one to be pleased with trifles. I revelled like a child in the unwonted stir and hum of life about me, and felt half ashamed of the intense amusement I derived from the lordly airs of an old gander, who marshalled his flock of geese up and down the road all day long. I felt quite angry with a young man at the breakfast-table of the hotel, who complained loudly that this old gentleman's cackling and hissing had kept him awake all night. I too, in the intervals of sleep, had heard the same sound, but to me it was sweet music.

On Sunday morning I had a treat for which I was quite unprepared. The Rev.

Morley Punshon, head of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, came to B——e, to lecture on the "Life and Writings of Lord Macaulay." On Sunday morning he preached in the open air, to accommodate the many who could not have found room in the Wesleyan Chapel. A little secluded dell, some distance from the main road, was thoroughly cleared of wood and underbrush, and rough benches were placed in profusion for seats. I was astonished at the numbers assembled—six hundred I was afterwards told. After the benches were full, the hill-sides were densely packed; and it was impossible not to go back in thought to the Scotch Covenanters and the heathery hills, so often sprinkled with their blood. All here was calm and peaceful; it was a lovely Sabbath morning, the air indescribably balmy and fragrant, the service very simple and impressive, the singing singularly sweet, and

the discourse delivered by the gifted minister full of fervid eloquence.

He preached from Psalm xlii. 4. My feelings nearly overcame me; it was the very first time since I left England that I had had the opportunity of publicly joining in worship with my fellow-Christians; and it appeared to me a matter of very small importance that most of those present were Wesleyans, while I was Church of England. The lecture on "Macaulay" was duly delivered the next day, and was much liked; but I did not go, preferring to pass the time with our poor invalid.

On Tuesday, September 2nd, your brother Charles came in and made arrangements to take his wife, child, and your sister, back on the following day. I made up my mind to go back with them, and again we took care to secure Canadian Joe and his team. It was a perilous journey for one in so much

physical suffering, but it was admirably managed. We laid a soft mattress in the bottom of the wagon, with plenty of pillows, and on this we placed your sister-in-law with the baby by her side. Charles sat with them to keep all steady; your sister and I sat with the driver. Canadian Joe surpassed himself in the care he took of the invalid; every bad piece of road he came to he walked his horses quite softly, looking back at Charles with a warning shake of the head, as much as to say, "Take care of her now!"

We travelled slowly, but by his great care arrived safely, and at the cleared farm nearest to mine we were met by your brother and brother-in-law, who had skilfully arranged a ship's hammock on a pole, and made of it a very tolerable palanquin. Into this your sister-in-law was carefully lifted, and two of the gentlemen carried her, the third relieving them at intervals. They got

her safely over all the gullies, and carried her past my log-house to her own home, where she was at once put to bed, and in a very few days began to recover. Your sister and I took charge of the dear little baby, and after a most fatiguing walk and much dangerous scrambling with such a precious load, we got him safely here, where he has remained our cherished nursling ever since, and has thriven well. His dear young mother, having quite recovered, comes every day to be with her little treasure.

We only just arrived in time; the rain began again and continued for some days. We had much trouble with the rain drifting in through the clap-boards of the roof. What would *Mr. Punch* have said could he have seen two ladies in bed with a baby between them, and a large umbrella fixed at the head of the bed to save them from the roof-drippings!

We had two visits this autumn from which we derived much pleasure. One from our old friend C. W., and one from a friend and connection of your sister-in-law's family, her eldest brother having married one of his sisters. H. L. was quite an addition to our working party. More than six feet high, strong and active, he fraternised at once with your brothers, and cheerfully helped them in their daily labours. Your brother hired a team of oxen for some days, and had the remaining trees lying in our clearing logged up, and watched for the first fine dry day to complete the burning begun in spring. Our two young friends assisted him in his labours, and they managed so well that the regular day's work was not interfered with. Every evening they set fire to some of the log-heaps, and diligently "branded" them up till they were reduced to ashes. As we could not admit our friends into the house

after a certain hour in the evening, and as their vigils extended far into the night, your brother used to provide the party with plenty of potatoes, which they roasted in the ashes and ate with butter and salt, with a large pot of coffee and an unlimited supply of tobacco—they being all inveterate smokers. As they had all fine voices and sang well together, the gipsy party was not a dull one, and the forest echoed with their favourite songs. Fortunately there was no one in our solitary neighbourhood to be disturbed from their slumbers, and provided they did not wake the baby, we rather enjoyed the unwonted noise, knowing how much they were enjoying themselves. Perhaps the most amusing time of all was the Saturday afternoon, when what we ladies called the "Jew trading" invariably took place. I really think that every article belonging to our young men changed hands at these times,

and the amusing manner in which the stores of each were laid out for public admiration and regularly haggled for, cannot be forgotten. In this manner your eldest brother's celebrated chassepot gun, picked up on the field of Sedan, gave place to a Colt's revolver and a small fowling-piece; his heavy gold seal (a much-coveted article) took the more useful form of corduroy trousers and heavy boots; in like manner both your brothers gladly bartered their fine dress shirts, and handkerchiefs, and satin ties, for coarser garments better fitted for the Bush, of which both C. W. and H. L. had a good stock now quite useless to them, as neither could make up his mind to a Bush life. These amusing transfers of property came to a close at last, after some weeks of incessant trafficking, with your brother's solemnly asking my permission to hand over to H. L., as a make-weight in the scale, a large woollen comforter which I

had knitted for him. Some of the bartering went on at "Pioneer Cottage," your brother Charles' place, a name most appropriately given, as he was the first of our party in the settlement. I called my log-house "Cedar Lodge" at first, and headed some of my letters to England with that elegant name, understanding that I was the happy owner of a number of cedar trees, but finding that my riches in cedar consisted in a small portion only of a dirty cedar-swamp, from which not one tree fit for building could be extracted, I dropped the grandiloquent nomenclature, and simply put for heading to my letters, "The Bush—Muskoka."

We felt quite dull when our friends left, but they correspond with both your brothers, and H. L. is not far from us, having married and settled at Toronto.

A very grave subject of consideration has arisen among us on the subject of domestic

servants. Should any providential improvement in our circumstances take place, or our farms become even moderately thriving, we should certainly once more require these social incumbrances, but where to find them would be a question. Certainly not in the settlement to which we belong. Not one of the ladies in our three families has a special vocation for cooking and house-tidying, though all have done it since we came here without complaint, and have done it well. Indeed, a most respectable settler, who, with other men and a team of oxen, was working for some days on our land to help your brother, remarked to his wife that he was quite astonished that a young lady (meaning your eldest sister), evidently unaccustomed to hard work, could do so much and could do it so well. He had noticed how comfortably all the different meals had been prepared and arranged. Your sister T——e too, in spite

of the hindrance of three little children, has always given great satisfaction to the workmen employed by her husband. We should of course hail the day when we could have the help in all household matters we formerly enjoyed; but we must surely seek for it at a distance from here.

The children of the settlers, both boys and girls, know well that on attaining the age of eighteen years, they can each claim and take up from Government a free grant of one hundred acres. They naturally feel their incipient independence and their individual interest in the country, and this makes them less inclined to submit to the few restrictions of servitude still sanctioned by common sense and general observance. They serve their temporary masters and mistresses under protest as it were, and are most unwilling to acknowledge their title to these obnoxious names. They consider it their undoubted

right to be on a footing of perfect equality with every member of the family, and have no inclination whatever to "sit below the salt."

When your sister-in-law returned from Bracebridge, her health was for some time too delicate for her to do any hard work, and we, having charge of the baby, could give her no assistance. Your brother Charles looked about the settlement for a respectable girl as a servant. He found one in every way suitable, about sixteen, and apparently healthy, strong, willing, and tolerably competent. He liked her appearance, and engaged her at the wages she asked. She entered upon her place, did her work well, and gave entire satisfaction. Everything was done to make her comfortable, even to the extent of giving her the whole Sunday to herself, as she was in the habit of attending the church some miles off and also the Sunday-school. In

little more than a week she suddenly left, assigning no reason but that she was "wanted at home," which we knew to be a falsehood, as she had two or three sisters capable of assisting her mother. We were greatly puzzled to find out her true reason for leaving. After a time it was made clear to us by a trustworthy person who had it from the family themselves. The young lady had found it *intolerably dull,* and it was further explained to us that no settler would allow his daughter to be in service where she was not allowed to sit at the same table with the family, and to join freely in the conversation at all times!

LETTER VIII.

I BEGIN this letter with a few observations in support of my oft-repeated assertion that poor ladies and gentlemen form the worst, or at least the most unsuccessful, class for emigration to Canada. I must give you a slight sketch of the class of settlers we have here, and of the conditions they must fulfil before they can hope to be in easy circumstances, much less in affluent ones. Of course I am speaking of settlers from the "old country," and not of Canadians born who sometimes find their way from the front

to try their fortunes in the backwoods. The settlers in this neighbourhood, for a circuit of about eight miles, are all of the lower classes; weavers from Scotland, agricultural labourers from England, artisans and mechanics from all parts. Whatever small sum of money a family of this class can collect with a view to emigration, very little of it is spent in coming over. They are invariably steerage passengers, and on landing at Quebec are forwarded, free of all expense, and well provided for on the road, by the Emigration Society, to the part where they intend settling. Say that they come to the free-grant lands of Muskoka. The intending settler goes before the commissioner of crown-lands, and (if a single man) takes up a lot of a hundred acres; if married and with children, he can claim another lot as "head of a family." He finds the conditions of his tenure specified on the paper he signs,

and sees that it will be five years before he can have his patent, and then only if he has cleared fifteen acres, and has likewise built thereon a log-house of certain dimensions. He pays some one a dollar to point out his lot, and to take him over it, and then selecting the best site, and with what assistance he can get from his neighbours, he clears a small patch of ground and builds a shanty. In the meantime, if he have a wife and family they are lodged and boarded for a very small sum at some near neighbour's. When he and his family have taken possession, he underbrushes and chops as much as he possibly can before the winter sets in; but on the first approach of the cold weather he starts for the lumber-shanties, and engages himself to work there, receiving from twenty to twenty-five dollars a month and his food. Should he be of any particular trade he goes to some large town, and is tolerably sure of employment.

It is certainly a very hard and anxious life for the wife and children, left to shift for themselves throughout the long dreary winter, too often on a very slender provision of flour and potatoes and little else.

When spring at last comes, the steady, hard-working settler returns with quite a little sum of money wherewith to commence his own farming operations. One of the most respectable and thriving settlers near us is a man who began life as a sturdy Kentish ploughboy. He is now an elderly man with a very large family and a good farm. He has thirty acres well cleared and under cultivation, has thirteen head of cattle and some fine pigs, has the best barn in the place, and has just removed his family into a large commodious plank house, with many rooms and a very fine cellar, built entirely at odd times by himself and his son, a steady, clever lad of eighteen.

This man for several years has gone at the beginning of the winter to one of the hotels in Bracebridge, where he acts as "stable-boy," and makes a great deal of money besides his food, which, in such a place, is of the best. He could very well now remain at home, and reap the reward of his thrift and industry, but prefers going on for a year or two longer, while he still has health and strength.

Now it is obvious that ladies and gentlemen have not, and cannot have these advantages. The ladies of a family cannot be left unprotected during the long winter, and indeed are, for the most part, physically incapable of chopping fire-wood, drawing water, and doing other hard outdoor work; I speak particularly of *poor* ladies and gentlemen. Should people of ample means *choose* to encounter the inevitable privations of the Bush, there are of course few which

cannot be at least alleviated by a judicious expenditure of money.

It may well be asked here, who is there with *ample means* who would dream of coming to Muskoka? I answer boldly, none but those who are entirely ignorant of the miseries of Bush life, or those who have been purposely misled by designing and interested people.

Here the settlers' wives and daughters work almost as hard as their husbands and fathers — log, burn, plant, and dig; and, in some instances, with the work adopt the habits of men, and smoke and chew tobacco to a considerable extent. This, I am happy to say, is not the case with all, nor even, I hope, with the majority; but nearly all the women, long before attaining middle age, look prematurely worn and faded, and many of the settlers themselves bear in their faces the unmistakable

signs of hard work, scanty food, and a perpetual struggle for existence.

I have not yet mentioned the subject of wild beasts, but I may truly say that ever since I came out here, they have been a complete bugbear to me, and my dread of them is still unconquerable. I have been much laughed at for my fears, but as it is well-known that there *are* wild animals in the recesses of these woods, and as they do sometimes show themselves without being sought for, I cannot consider my fears groundless.

I have been told by one settler, who has been here for many years, and has often "camped out" all night in the woods, that he has never seen anything "worse than himself;" but another settler, the trapper mentioned in a former letter, kills some wild animals every year, and two or three times he has been met going over our lots in

search of some bear or lynx which had escaped him.

We are told that when the clearings are larger, and more animals kept, especially pigs, that our visits from Bruin at least will be more frequent; and since your brother Charles, some months ago, got two fine pigs, he has repeatedly found bear-tracks in his beaver meadow, and even close up to the fence of his clearing. To say the least of it, the pleasure of a solitary walk is greatly impaired by the vague terror of a stray bear confronting you on the pathway, or of a spiteful lynx dropping down upon your shoulders from the branch of a tree.

The morning before H. L. left us for Toronto, he went to the post-office, but before he got to the end of our clearing, he saw at some distance a grey animal, which at first he took to be a neighbour's dog; long before he got up to it, it cleared the fence at

one bound, and vanished into the Bush. He thought this odd, but went on; returning in the twilight he was greatly astonished to see the same animal again in the clearing, and this time he might have had a good shot at it, but unfortunately he was encumbered with a can of milk, which he had good-naturedly brought for me, and before he could bring his gun to bear upon it, the creature was again in the depths of the Bush.

Much conversation ensued about it; some thought it must have been a chance wolf, but Charles, whose opinion we all looked to, was more inclined to the idea of its being a grey fox; he hardly thought that any other wild animal would have come so fearlessly into the clearing.

H. L. went to Toronto, and in a few days your brother received a letter from him saying that he had just seen a lynx newly

killed which had been brought into the town, and that in colour, shape, and size, it exactly resembled the animal he had seen in my clearing. It has since been supposed that this might be the lynx the trapper said he was tracking when he passed near here in the spring.

I have often spoken of the broad deep gully at the end of my lot near the "concession" road. We had an old negro located on the strip of land between for more than five weeks. One fearfully cold day last winter, during a heavy snowstorm, your brother Charles came upon the poor old man "camping" for the night on the road near here. He talked to him a little, gave him all the small change he happened to have about him, and coming home and telling us, we made a small collection, which with a loaf of bread, he took to the old man next morning before he went away.

Before the close of this autumn, Charles again met his old acquaintance, looking more ragged and feeble than ever. He had with him only his axe and a small bundle. He said that he was making his way to a lot which he had taken up eight miles off, where he was going to locate himself and remain. He spoke too of having friends in the front who would give him some assistance, and at least send him some flour.

Again he camped out for the night, and we held a family consultation about him. Your brothers proposed going with him to his lot, and helping him to build his shanty. They talked of taking provisions and being out for some days. They also spoke of taking him food twice a week during the winter for fear he should starve, as he complained that his neighbours were very unkind to him, and did not want him located among them.

We all loudly protested against this plan as being altogether quixotic, and reminded them that to carry out their plan they must periodically neglect their own work, leave us alone, and run the risk of being often weather-bound, thus causing injury to their own health, and much alarm to us. We suggested an expedient, to let poor Jake settle himself near my gully for the winter; your brothers to build him a shanty there, and to take him every day sufficient warm food to make him comfortable. Charles promised to join with us in giving him so much bread and potatoes every week. I paid one visit to the old negro, whom I found dirty, and with only one eye, yet not at all repulsive-looking, as he had a very pleasant countenance, and talked well and intelligently.

He agreed to our plan, and your brothers soon raised the logs of a good shanty, and

till it was completed he built himself a wigwam, Indian fashion, which he made very warm and comfortable. We told him also that if he liked to make a small clearing round his shanty, we would pay him for his chopping when he left. The winter soon came, and the snow began to fall. The first very frosty night made us anxious about our old pensioner, and your brother went to him early the next morning with a can of hot tea for his breakfast. What was his astonishment when he crossed the gully to hear loud voices in Jake's little encampment.

On reaching it he asked the old man who was with him. He significantly pointed to the wigwam, from which a woman's voice called out:

"Yes! I'm here, and I've got the hagur!" (ague).

A few minutes afterwards the owner of

the voice issued from the hut, in the person of a stout, bold-looking, middle-aged woman, (white), who evidently considered old Jake, his shanty, his wigwam, and all his effects, as her own undoubted property. We found that this was the "Mary" of whom Jake had spoken as being the person with whom he had boarded and lodged in the front, and who had found him out here. In the course of the day both your brothers paid the old man a visit, and signified to him that it would be as well if he and his companion took their departure, as we knew he was not married to her, and we had a wholesome dread of five children, whom Jake had incidentally mentioned, following in the wake of their mother.

We gave them leave, however, to remain till the Monday following, as we did not wish to drive any one out precipitately who was suffering from the "hagur." Till they

went, we supplied them with provisions. On the following Monday they departed. Your brothers gave poor Jake two dollars for the little bit of chopping he had done, and we gave him some bread, coffee, and potatoes, as provisions for his journey. Your brothers saw him and Mary off with all their bundles, and returned home, leaving my gully as silent and solitary as ever.

We heard afterwards that Jake did not go to his own lot, as he seemed to intend, but was seen with his companion making his way to the main road out of the Bush. A settler overtook them, and told us they were quarrelling violently for the possession of a warm quilted French counterpane, which we had lent to old Jake to keep him warm in his wigwam, and had allowed him to take away.

We were disappointed this year in not having a visit from the old colporteur of

Parry's Sound. He came last year during a heavy storm of snow, with a large pack of cheap Bibles and Testaments, and told us he was an agent for the Wesleyan Society, and had orders to distribute gratis where there was really no means of paying. In answer to some remark of mine, he said that "the Bible must always follow the axe."

I recognised more than ever, how, by the meanest and weakest instruments, God works out His mighty designs. This poor man was verging towards the decline of life; had a hollow cough, and was in frame very feeble and fragile, yet he was full of zeal, travelled incessantly, and dispensed numbers of copies of the Word of God as he passed from settlement to settlement. I bought two New Testaments for eight cents each, well printed, and strongly bound.

I am at work occasionally at my pleasant task of recording Bush reminiscences. My

labours have at least kept me from vain and fruitless regrets and repinings.

"*Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate!*" How often have I repeated these dismal words to myself since I came into the Bush, and felt them to be the knell of hope and happiness! But time flies whether in joy or sorrow. We are now in the middle of our second winter, those dreadful winters of close imprisonment, which last for nearly seven months, and which your sister and I both agree, form the severest trial of Bush life. My aspirations, in former years, were manifold; but were I asked now what were the three absolute essentials for human happiness, I should be tempted to reply, "Roads to walk upon, a church to worship in, and a doctor within reach in case of necessity!" All these are wanting in the Bush; but as we have incessant daily occupation, an extensive correspondence, and as providentially

we brought out all our stock of cherished books, we manage to live on without too much complaining.

Your brother Charles is doing pretty well, and hopes to bring his few animals safely through the winter. Your brother-in-law also is making progress, and is expecting from England a partner (a young relation of his own) whose coming will probably insure him success. We remain just as we were, striving, struggling, and hoping against hope, that success may yet crown our endeavours. Our farm stock is easily counted, and easily taken care of: your brother's dog, with three very fat puppies; my pretty cat "Tibbs," with her little son "Hodge," and a magnificent tom puss, whose real home is at "Pioneer Cottage," but who, being of social habits and having a general invitation, does me the honour to eat, drink, and sleep here.

My sketches of Bush life are an occupation and an amusement to me, but I can truly say that they very faintly portray our sufferings and our privations.

LETTERS FROM AN EMIGRANT LADY.

Part II.

WRITTEN TWO YEARS AFTERWARDS.

LETTERS FROM AN EMIGRANT LADY.

PART II.

IN my former letters I spoke in a tone of mingled hope and fear as to the result of our efforts to make Bush-farming succeed without capital, and without even the means of living comfortably while trying the experiment.

It is needless to say to those who know anything of Muskoka, that the misgivings were fully realised, and the hopes proved mere delusions, and melted away imperceptibly

tibly as those airy fabrics too often do. We were certainly much deceived by the accounts given of Muskoka; after a four years' residence I am inclined to think that from the very first the capabilities of its soil for agricultural purposes have been greatly exaggerated.

It will require years of extensive clearing, and constant amelioration of the land by means of manure and other applications, before it will be capable of bearing heavy grain crops; it is a poor and hungry soil, light and friable, mostly red sandstone loam, and if a settler chances to find on his lot a small patch of heavy clay loam fit for raising wheat, the jubilant fuss that is made over it shows that it is not a common character of the soil.

The only crops at all reliable are oats and potatoes, and even these are subject to be injured by the frequent summer

droughts and by the clouds of grasshoppers which occasionally sweep over Muskoka like an Egyptian plague.

For years to come the hard woods on a settler's lot will be his most valuable source of profit; and as the railroad advances nearer and nearer, the demand for these woods for the lumber market will greatly increase.

But to return to our domestic history. The autumn of 1873 saw the first breaking-up of our little colony in the final departure from the Bush of my dear child, Mrs. C——, and her young family. My son-in-law, Mr. C——, soon found his Bush-farming as wearisome and unprofitable as we did ourselves. Having formerly taken his degree of B.A. at St. John's College, Cambridge, and his wishes having long tended to the Church as a profession, nothing stood between him and ordination but a little reading up in classics and theology, which he accomplished

with the assistance of his kind friend the Church of England clergyman at Bracebridge.

He was ordained by the Bishop of Toronto in October, 1873, and was at once appointed to a distant parish. The final parting was most painful, but it was so obviously for the good of the dear ones leaving us that we tried to repress all selfish regrets, and I, in particular, heartily thanked God that even a portion of the family had escaped from the miseries of Bush-life.

Our small community being so greatly lessened in number, the monotony of our lives was perceptibly increased. None but those who have experienced it can ever realise the utter weariness and isolation of Bush-life. The daily recurrence of the same laborious tasks, the want of time for mental culture, the absence of congenial intercourse with one's fellow-creatures, the many hours of

unavoidable solitude, the dreary unbroken silence of the immense forest which closes round the small clearings like a belt of iron; all these things ere long press down the most buoyant spirit, and superinduce a kind of dull despair, from which I have suffered for months at a time.

In conversation once with my daughter-in-law, who was often unavoidably alone for the whole day, we mutually agreed that there were times when the sense of loneliness became so dreadful, that had a bear jumped in at the window, or the house taken fire, or a hurricane blown down the farm buildings, we should have been tempted to rejoice and to hail the excitement as a boon.

And yet, strange as it may appear, I dreaded above all things visits from our neighbours. It is true they seldom came, but when they did, every one of them would have considered it a want of kindness not to

prolong their visit for many hours. Harassed as I was with never-ceasing anxiety, and much occupied with my correspondence and other writing, I found such visits an intolerable nuisance, particularly as after a little friendly talk about household matters, knitting, etc., where we met as it were on common ground, there was invariably a prolonged silence, which it required frantic efforts on my part to break, so as to prevent my guests feeling awkward and uncomfortable. On these occasions I was generally left with a nervous headache which lasted me for days.

One well-meaning, but especially noisy and vulgar individual was a continual terror to me. She more than once said to my eldest son :

" Your pore ma must be that lonesome and dull, that if it warn't for the children I would often go and cheer her up a bit."

My dear boy did his best to save his " pore

ma" from such an infliction, and was thankful that the children presented an obstacle which fortunately for me was never got over.

In my estimation of the merits and agreeable conversation of our neighbours I made one great exception. Our nearest neighbour was an intelligent, well-conducted Englishman, who lived a lonely bachelor life, which in his rare intervals of rest from hard work he greatly solaced by reading. We lent him all our best books and English newspapers, and should have been glad to see him oftener, but he was so afraid of intruding that he seldom came except to return or change his books; at such times we had much really pleasant conversation, and often a stirring discussion on some public topic of the day, or it might be a particular reign in Cassell's "English History," or one of Shakespeare's plays, both of which voluminous works he was reading through.

He had been head clerk in a large shop in Yorkshire, and was slightly democratic in his opinions, my tendencies being in the opposite direction; we just differed sufficiently to prevent conversation being dull. A more intelgent, hard-working, abstemious and trustworthy man I have seldom known, and we got to consider him quite in the light of a friend. For three winters, whether we had much or little, Mr. A——g was our honoured guest on Christmas Day.

One great solace of our lives was the number of letters we received from the "old country," but even these were at times the cause of slight annoyance to my ever-sensitive feelings. All my dear friends and relations, after warm condolences on the disappointments we at first met with, would persist in assuring me that the *worst* being over, we were sure to gain ground, and meet with more success for the future. From whence they gathered

their consolatory hopes on our behalf it is impossible for me to say, certainly not from my letters home, which, in spite of all my efforts, invariably fell into a melancholy, not to say a grumbling tone. *I* knew too well that, however bad things might be, the *worst* was yet to come, and with a pardonable exaggeration of feeling under peculiar circumstances, often said to myself:

> "And in the lowest deep, a lower deep,
> Still threatening to devour me, opens wide."

The autumn and winter of 1873 passed away with no more remarkable event than our first patch of fall wheat being sown, from which, in a burst of temporary enthusiasm, we actually expected to have sufficient flour for the wants of at least *one* winter. 1874 having dawned upon us, we by no means slackened in our efforts to improve the land and make it profitable; but we found that

although our expenses increased, our means did not. The more land we cleared, the more the want of money became apparent to crop and cultivate it, the labour of one individual being quite insufficient for the purpose.

To remedy this want, my son resolved to do what was a common practice in the settlement—go out to work for his neighbours, receiving from them return work, instead of any other payment. Our only difficulty in this matter was the having to provide sufficient food, even of the plainest kind, for hungry men engaged in logging; but even this we managed during the first half of the year. 1874 seemed to be a year of general want in our settlement; for when my son came home from his day of outside toil, our usual question was, "Well, dear, what did you have for dinner?" To which the reply mostly was, "Oh! bread-

and-treacle and tea," or "porridge and potatoes," etc. And this in the houses of the better class of settlers, who were noted for putting the best they had before any neighbours working for them. In fact, there was so little of the circulating medium in the place, that all buying and selling was conducted in the most primitive style of barter. A settler having hay, corn, or cattle to sell, was obliged to take other commodities in exchange; and more than once, when we wanted some indispensable work done, my son, finding that we could in no way provide a money payment, would look over his tools or farm implements, and sometimes even his clothes, and part with whatever could possibly be spared.

I have mentioned our fall wheat sown in the autumn of 1873. Alas for all human expectations! The crop was pronounced to be a magnificent one by experienced judges;

but when it came to be threshed, every grain was found to be wizened, shrivelled, and discoloured, and fit for nothing but to feed poultry. The crop had been winter-killed; that is, frozen and thawed so often before the snow finally covered it, that it was quite spoiled. We suffered at intervals this year more severely from the want of money than we had ever done; and had even long spells of hunger and want, which I trust have prepared us all to feel during the remainder of our lives a more full and perfect sympathy with our destitute fellow-creatures. In vain did we hope and wait, like Mr. Micawber, for "something to turn up;" nothing did turn up, but fresh troubles and increased fatigues.

Had it not been for the exceeding kindness of our friendly lawyer in London, and of a very dear friend of my early years (himself a lawyer), who sent us occasional assistance, we

must have sunk under our wants and miseries. I did my very best to keep the "wolf from the door" by my literary efforts, and met with much kindness and consideration; but after unceasing industry, long continued, got to know that a few articles inserted at intervals in a fashionable American magazine, however much they might be liked and approved of, would do but little towards relieving the wants of a family. I became at last quite discouraged; for so much material was rejected and returned upon my hands, that I was fain to conclude that some frightful spell of dulness had fallen upon my once lively pen.

The work of this year appeared to us all to be harder than ever, and my eldest son's health and strength were evidently on the decline. It is true that nearly every day he did the work of two men, as, in addition to the cultivation of the land, he had to chop

all the fire-wood for daily use, to draw the water, and to do various jobs more or less fatiguing to insure anything like comfort to the family. He became so attenuated and cadaverous-looking, that we often told him that he would make his fortune on any stage as the lean apothecary in "Romeo and Juliet."

It was with scarcely-suppressed anguish that, night after night, we saw him so fatigued and worn-out as to be hardly able to perform his customary ablutions and toilet before sitting down to the reading and writing with which he invariably concluded the day, and which was the only employment which linked us all to our happier life in former days. Indeed, both my sons, in spite of hard work and scanty fare, managed to give a few brief moments to study, and both at intervals wrote a few articles for our local paper, which at least showed an aptitude for

higher pursuits than Bush-farming. Both my sons at times worked for and with each other, which was a most pleasant arrangement.

At this time my youngest son was going through, on his own farm, the same struggles as ourselves, and was, I am bound to say, in every respect as hard-working and energetic as his elder brother. His family was fast increasing, as he had now two little boys, in addition to the one of whom we had charge; and before the end of the year, he was thankful to accept the situation of schoolmaster at Allunsville, which added forty pounds a year to his slender means.

On one occasion, when he was working on our land with his brother, and when four other men were giving my son return-work, and were logging a large piece of ground near the house, having brought their oxen with them, we had half an hour of the delicious

excitement of which my daughter-in-law and myself had talked so calmly some time before.

It was a bright sunny day, and my daughter and myself were busily engaged in cooking a substantial dinner for our working party, when, chancing to look up, my daughter exclaimed, "Mamma, is that sunlight or fire shining through the roof?" I ran out directly, and saw that the shingles below the chimney were well alight and beginning to blaze up. Calling to my daughter in passing, I flew to the end of the house and screamed out "Fire! fire!" in a voice which, my sons afterwards laughingly assured me, must have been heard at the post-office, three miles off. It had the immediate effect of bringing the whole party to our assistance in a few seconds, who were met by my daughter with two pails of water, which she had promptly procured from the well.

My two sons, both as active as monkeys, were immediately on the roof; one with an axe, to cut away the burning shingles; the other with water, handed up by men, to keep the fire from spreading. In ten minutes all danger was over; but it left us rather frightened and nervous, and I must confess that I never again wished for excitement of the same dangerous kind.

In the summer of this year I went to Bracebridge, on a visit to my daughter, Mrs. C., whose husband had lately taken priest's orders, and been appointed by his bishop resident Church of England minister in that place, a change very agreeable to him, as he was well known, and much liked and esteemed by the inhabitants.

When I left the Bush to go into Bracebridge, it was with the full intention of never returning to it, and all my family considered my visit to Mrs. C. as a farewell visit before

leaving for England. I had made great exertions to get from my kind lawyer and a friend an advance of sufficient money to take one of us back to the dear "old country," and all agreed that I should go first, being well aware that my personal solicitations would soon secure the means of bringing back my eldest son and daughter, who, being the only unmarried ones of the family, were my constant companions.

Having, unfortunately for my plans, but quite unavoidably, made use of part of the money to leave things tolerably comfortable in the Bush, I waited anxiously till the deficit could be made up, which I fully hoped would soon be the case, a work of mine, in fifteen parts, having been forwarded to a publisher in New York, with a view to publication if approved of. What was my distress at receiving the manuscript back, with this observation appended to it: "The work is

too English, local, and special, to be acceptable on this side of the Atlantic"! Other articles intended for the magazine I sometimes wrote for were also returned upon my hands about the same time. I draw a veil over my feelings, and will only say that disappointment, anxiety, suspense, and the burning heat of the weather gave me a very severe attack of illness, which frightened my dear child Mrs. C. most dreadfully, and left me so weak, feeble, and completely crushed, that I was thankful to send for my son, and to go back ignominiously to the hated Bush, to be tenderly nursed by my dear children, and to grieve over the loss of money so utterly thrown away.

The year wore slowly away, and Christmas Eve came at last; the snow had fallen in immense quantities, and the roads were nearly impassable from the deep drift. Our worthy friend Mr. A——g was away at the

lochs, eight miles off, where he had taken a job of work, and we therefore felt pretty sure that he could not pay us his customary Christmas visit. We felt almost thankful, much as we liked him; for we had been literally without a cent for two months, and all our provision for Christmas festivities consisted in plenty of potatoes and a small modicum of flour.

But we were not to escape the humiliation of having nothing to put before our invited guest. Long after dark a well-known knock at the door announced Mr. A——g, who came for the key of his house, of which we always had the charge, and who had walked the whole way from the lochs to keep his tryst with us, over roads deep in snow and quite dangerous from snow-drifts at either side, which were so many pitfalls for unwary travellers. He came in, and we made him directly some hot tea—a welcome refresh-

ment after his cold and fatiguing tramp of six hours.

When he was gone, we held a committee of ways and means; but as nothing could be done to alter the state of affairs, and as there was absolutely a ludicrous side to the question, we laughed heartily and went to bed.

Having edified the public with an account of our first Christmas dinner in the Bush, I cannot resist the temptation of giving the details of our last, which certainly did not show much improvement in our finances.

On Christmas morning, 1874, we very early heard a joyous shout, and saw dear Charles advancing triumphantly with two very small salt herrings (the last of his stock) dangling in one hand, and a huge vegetable-marrow in the other, these articles being the only addition he could make to our Christmas dinner, which for the three previous

years he had been mainly instrumental in providing.

What could we do but laugh and cheerfully accept the situation? Charles promised to bring his dear wife and the two babies down on the ox-sleigh as early as possible. We borrowed, without hesitation, some butter from our friend Mr. A——g, who had a stock of it, and my eldest son went himself to fetch him before dinner, fearing that delicacy would prevent his coming, as he could too well guess the state of the larder.

Our guests assembled and dinner-time arrived, I placed on the table a large and savoury dish of vegetable-marrow mashed, with potatoes well buttered, peppered, salted and baked in the oven; the two herrings carefully cooked and a steaming dish of potatoes, with plenty of tea, made up a repast which we much enjoyed. When tea-time came, my daughter, who had devoted

herself for the good of the community, supplied us with relays of "dampers," which met with universal approbation.

In compliment to our guest, we had all put on what my boys jocosely term our "Sunday go-to-meeting clothes!" I was really glad that the grubs of so many weary weeks past on this day turned into butterflies. Cinderella's transformations were not more complete. My daughter became the elegant young woman she has always been considered; my sons, in once more getting into their gentlemanly clothes, threw off the careworn look of working-day fatigue, and became once more distinguished and good-looking young men; and as to my pretty daughter-in-law, I have left her till the last to have the pleasure of saying that I never saw her look more lovely. She wore a very elegant silk dress, had delicate lace and bright ribbons floating about her, a gold

locket and chain and sundry pretty ornaments, relics of her girlish days, and to crown all her beautiful hair flowing over her shoulders. I thought several times that afternoon, as I saw her caressing first one and then another of her three baby boys, that a painter might have been proud to sketch the pretty group, and to throw in at his fancy gorgeous draperies, antique vases and beautiful flowers, in lieu of the rude coarse framework of a log-house.

I could not but notice this Christmas Day that no attempt was made at *singing*, not even our favourite hymns were proposed; in fact the whole year had been so brim full of misfortune and trouble that I think none of our hearts were attuned to melody. Ah! dear reader, it takes long chastening before we can meekly drink the cup of affliction and say from the heart, "*Thy will be done!*" Let you and I, remembering our own short-

comings in this respect, be very tender over those of others!

Our party broke up early, as the children and their mother had to be got home before the light of the short winter-day had quite vanished, but we all agreed that we had passed a few hours very pleasantly.

Very different was our fare on New Year's Day of 1875—a sumptuous wild turkey, which we roasted, having been provided for us by the kindness of one whom we must ever look upon in the light of a dear friend.

The "gentlemanly Canadian," mentioned by me in my Bush reminiscences, read my papers and at once guessed at the authorship. Being in Muskoka on an election tour with his friend Mr. Pardee, he procured a guide and found us out in the Bush. He stayed but a short time, but the very sight of his kind friendly face did us good for days. Finding that I had never seen a wild turkey

from the prairie, he asked leave to send me one, and did not forget his promise, sending a beautiful bird which was meant for our Christmas dinner, but owing to delays at Bracebridge only reached us in time for New Year's Day; which brings me to 1875, an era of very important family changes.

I began this year with more of hopefulness and pleasure than I had known for a long time. My determination that this year should see us clear of the Bush had long been fixed, and I felt that as I brought unconquerable energy, and the efforts of a strong will to bear upon the project, it was sure to be successful. I had no opposition now to dread from my dear companions; both my son and daughter were as weary as myself of our long-continued and hopeless struggles. My son's health and strength were visibly decreasing; he had already spent more than three years of the prime

of his life in work harder than a common labourer's, and with no better result than the very uncertain prospect of a bare living at the end of many years more of daily drudgery. His education fitted him for higher pursuits, and it was better for him to begin the world again, even at the age of thirty-two, than to continue burying himself alive.

We had long looked upon Bush life in the light of exile to a penal settlement without even the convict's chance of a ticket-of-leave. All these considerations nerved me for the disagreeable task of getting money from England for our removal, in which, thanks to the unwearied kindness of the friends I have before mentioned, I succeeded, and very early in the year we began to make preparations for our final departure. It required the stimulus of hope to enable us to bear the discomforts of our last two months' residence in the Bush.

After the turn of the year, immense quantities of snow continued to fall till we were closely encircled by walls of ice and snow fully five feet in depth. The labour of keeping paths open to the different farm-buildings was immense, and the unavoidable task of cutting away the superincumbent ice and snow from the different roofs was one of danger as well as toil. I was told that we were passing through an exceptional winter, and I must believe it, as long after we were in Bracebridge the snow continued to fall, and even so late as the middle of May a heavy snow-storm spread its white mantle on the earth, and hid it from view for many hours.

The last day at length arrived, we sat for the last time by our log-fire, we looked for the last time on the familiar landscape, and I, at least, felt not one pang of regret. My bump of adhesiveness is enormous; I cling

fondly to the friends I love, to my pet animals, and even to places where I have lived; in quitting France I could have cried over every shrub and flower in my beloved garden. How great then must have been my unhappiness, and how I must have loathed my Bush life, when at quitting it for ever, my only feeling was joy at my escape!

At the time we left, the roads were so dangerous for the horses' legs that my son had the greatest difficulty in hiring a wagon and team for our own use—all our heavy baggage had been taken in by ox-sleighs. He succeeded at last, and in the afternoon of the 2nd of March our exodus began. My son and the driver removed all but the front seat, and carefully spread our softest bedding, blankets and pillows, at the bottom of the wagon, and on these my daughter and myself reclined at our ease with our dear little charge between us. My favourite cat

Tibbs, of "Atlantic Monthly" celebrity, was in a warm basket before me, and her companion Tomkins, tied up in a bag, slept on my lap the whole way. My son sat with the driver, and Jack, our black dog, ran by the side. We slept at Utterson, and in the morning went on to Bracebridge, where my son had secured for us a small roadside house.

When we were tolerably settled Edward started for Toronto and Montreal in search of employment, taking with him many excellent letters of introduction. In Montreal he was most kindly and hospitably welcomed by two dear friends, ladies who came out with us in the same ship from England, who received him into their house, introduced him to a large circle of friends, and did much to restore the shattered health of the "handsome emigrant," as they had named him in the early stages of their acquaintance.

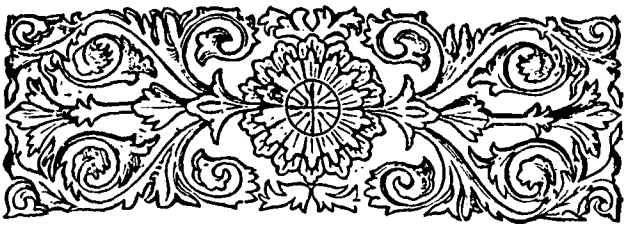
Eventually finding nothing suitable in either place, our dear companion and protector for so many years decided to go on the Survey, his name having been put down by our kind friend, the donor of the wild turkey, on the Staff of his relation, Mr. Stuart, appointed by Government to survey the district of Parry Sound. Severe illness of our little boy, followed by illness of my own which still continues, was my welcome to Bracebridge, but still I rejoice daily that our Bush life is for ever over.

Here I finally drop the curtain on our domestic history, and make but a few parting observations. I am far from claiming undue sympathy for my individual case, but would fain deter others of the genteel class, and especially elderly people, from breaking up their comfortable homes and following an *ignis fatuus* in the shape of emigration to a distant land.

I went into the Bush of Muskoka strong and healthy, full of life and energy, and fully as enthusiastic as the youngest of our party. I left it with hopes completely crushed, and with health so hopelessly shattered from hard work, unceasing anxiety and trouble of all kinds, that I am now a helpless invalid, entirely confined by the doctor's orders to my bed and sofa, with not the remotest chance of ever leaving them for a more active life during the remainder of my days on earth.

A WEDDING IN MUSKOKA.

An Incident of Life in the Canadian Backwoods.



I FREELY acknowledge that I am a romantic old woman; my children are continually telling me that such is my character, and without shame I confess the soft impeachment. I do not look upon romance as being either frivolous, unreal, or degrading; I consider it as a heaven-sent gift to the favoured few, enabling them to cast a softening halo of hope and beauty round the stern and rugged realities of daily life, and fitting them also to enter into the warm feelings and projects of the young, long after the dreams of love

and youth have become to themselves things of the past. After this exordium, I need hardly say that I love and am loved by young people, that I have been the depositary of many innocent love secrets, and have brought more than one affair of the kind to a happy conclusion. I feel tempted to record my last experience, which began in France and ended happily in Muskoka. The parties, I am happy to say, are still living, to be, I doubt not, greatly amused at my faithful reminiscences of their past trials.

Just seven years ago I was in France busily working in my beautiful flower-garden, when I was told that visitors awaited me in the drawing-room. Hastily pulling off my garden-gloves and apron, I went in and found a very dear young friend, whom I shall call John Herbert; he asked my permission to present to me four young

ladies of his acquaintance, all sisters, and very sweet specimens of pretty, lady-like English girls. The eldest, much older than the rest, and herself singularly attractive, seemed completely to merge her own identity in that of her young charges, to whose education she had devoted the best years of her early womanhood, and who now repaid her with loving affection and implicit deference to her authority. It was easy for me to see that the "bright, particular star" of my handsome, dashing young friend was the second sister, a lovely, shy girl of sixteen, whose blushes and timidity fully assured me of the state of matters between the two.

The mother of Mary Lennox (such was my heroine's name) lived in France, her father in England, and in this divided household the care of the three younger girls had been entirely left to their eldest sister. John Herbert had made their acquaint-

ance in that extraordinary manner in which young ladies and gentlemen do manage to become acquainted, as often in real life as in novels, without any intercourse between the respective families. For two or three months he had been much in their society, and the well-known result had followed. I have rarely seen a handsomer couple than these boy and girl lovers, on whom the eldest sister evidently looked with fond and proud admiration; and when, after a protracted visit, they took leave of me, I felt fully disposed to treat them with the warmest kindness and friendship.

In subsequent interviews, poor Herbert more fully opened his heart to me, and laid before me all his plans and projects for the future. The son of an old officer who fell during the Crimean war; he had neither friends nor fortune, but had to make his own position in the world. At this time he was

twenty-one, and having just entered the merchant service was about to sail for Australia.

He told me also of the fierce opposition made by every member of Mary's family, except her eldest sister, to their engagement. I was not at all surprised at this, and told him so; for could anything be more imprudent than an engagement between two people so young and so utterly without this world's goods?

Mary, like himself, had neither fortune nor prospects. She was going to England to a finishing school with her two sisters, with the fixed idea of qualifying herself for a governess. Herbert entreated me to be a friend to these dear girls in his absence, to watch especially over his Mary during their brief holidays which were to be spent in France, to be his medium of correspondence with her while away, and above all to watch

for every incidental opening to influence her family in his favour.

To all his wishes I at last consented, not without seriously laying before him that his carrying out this wish of his heart mainly depended upon his own steadiness, good conduct, and success in his profession. He promised everything, poor fellow, and religiously kept his promise. A few hurried interviews at my house were followed by a tearful farewell, and then, for the first time, the young lovers drifted apart. Herbert sailed for Australia, and Mary and her sisters crossed the Channel and went to school.

I shall try briefly to sketch the appearance of my two young friends at this momentous epoch of their lives. Mary Lennox had large, soft, grey eyes full of expression, with very beautifully pencilled eyebrows of dark-brown, the colour of her hair, of which she

had a great abundance. She had a very handsome nose, and a well-formed face, with a colour varying with every shade of feeling. In height she was rather below than above middle size, with a pretty, slight figure, girlish and graceful. In complexion she was a fair brunette, which suited well with the colour of her eyes and hair. A great charm to me was the shy, downcast look of her pretty face, partly arising from the natural timidity of her character, and partly from the novelty of her position.

After a confidential intercourse of some weeks, I found her possessed of considerable character and steady principles, and her early engagement seemed to have given her far more serious views of life and its duties, than could have been expected in one so young. While her more mercurial sisters were romping in my garden, and chasing my pussy cats, she would mostly sit with her

hand confidingly in mine, while her eldest sister and myself talked of books, music, and all the topics of the day.

As to John Herbert, none could look upon him and not acknowledge that he was as eminently handsome as his young lady-love. Not above middle height, his figure was slight and elegant, but well knit and muscular, giving promise of still greater strength when more fully developed. His merry laughing eyes were a clear hazel, with yellow spots, very uncommon and very beautiful. His features finely cut, and delicately chiselled, would have been perfect, but that critics pronounced his nose to be a trifle too long. His eyebrows were dark and rather thickly marked, giving great expression to his eyes. A beautiful head of dark curly hair, and a soft short moustache completed the appearance of one of the handsomest boys I have ever seen.

At this time he was full of energy, life, and determination, fond of active, outdoor employment, with a presence of mind and a dauntless courage which never failed him in moments of danger, and which enabled him in after years to extricate himself and others from scenes of imminent danger. Indeed, his sister averred that such was his presence of mind, that should his ship be wrecked, and every one on board be lost, Herbert would surely be saved if with only a butter-boat to cling to. He was truly affectionate and kind-hearted, but at this early age slightly imperious and self-willed, having been greatly flattered and spoilt in child-hood; but contact with the world does much to smooth off the sharpest angularities and poor Herbert had a rough future before him.

After Herbert had sailed for Melbourne, and Mary and her sisters had gone to school,

more than a year elapsed, during which time letters duly arrived, which I carefully forwarded; and soon after the expiration of that time, he and his ship arrived safely at Liverpool. Having with some difficulty obtained from the owners a few days' leave, he hurried over to France to see and reassure his anxious and beloved Mary. Fortunately it was the Christmas holidays, and as soon as I could notify his arrival to Miss Lennox, she brought all the dear girls down to me.

Then ensued, for the lovers, long walks up and down my garden, in spite of the cold; for us all a few pleasant tea-parties; and then another separation, which this time was to extend over more than three years.

I am by no means favourable to long engagements, but these two were so young that I have always considered the years of anxiety and suspense they passed through,

as an excellent training-time for both. They certainly helped to form Mary's character, and to give her those habits of patience and trusting hopefulness which have been of so much benefit to her since. Nor was she ever allowed to think herself forgotten. Fond and affectionate letters came regularly every month, and at rare intervals such pretty tokens of remembrance as the slender means of her sailor lover could procure. Perfumes and holy beads from India, feathers from Abyssinia, and a pretty gold ring, set with pearls of the purest water, from the Persian Gulf.

Later came the pleasing intelligence that John Herbert had passed an excellent examination to qualify him as mate, and was on board one of the ships belonging to the company which took out the expedition for laying the cable in the Persian Gulf. On board this ship, called the *British India*, he

met with a gentleman, whose influence over his future fate has long appeared to us all providential. This person was Major C——, the officer in command of the party sent out. They had many conversations together; and cheered and encouraged by his kindness, Herbert ventured to address a letter to him, in which he stated how much he was beginning to suffer from the heat of India; how in his profession he had been driven about the world for nearly five years, and still found himself as little able to marry and settle as at first; that he had no friend to place him in any situation which might better his position, and that his desire to quit a seafaring life was increased by the fact that he was never free from sea-sickness, which pursued and tormented him in every voyage just as it did in the beginning.

The kind and gentlemanly Major C—— responded warmly to this appeal; they had

a long interview, in which he told Herbert that he himself was about to return to England, and felt sure that he could procure for him a good situation in the Telegraph Department in Persia. He gave him his address in London, and told him to come and see him as soon as he got back from India.

John Herbert lost no time, when the expedition was successfully over, in giving up his situation as mate, and in procuring all necessary testimonials as to good conduct and capacity. Indeed, he so wrought upon the officials of the *British India*, that they gave him a free passage in one of their ships as far as Suez. The letter containing the news of his improved prospects and speedy return occasioned the greatest joy.

I had some time before made the acquaintance of Mrs. Lennox, and from her manner, as well as from what Mrs. Lennox told me, I

saw with joy that all active opposition was over, and that the engagement was tacitly connived at by the whole family. It was in the beginning of April that John Herbert arrived, his health much improved by absolute freedom from hard work and night watches. He had to pay all his own expenses from Suez, and just managed the overland journey on his little savings of eighteen or twenty pounds.

The "lovers' walk" in my garden was now in constant occupation, and the summer-house at the end became a permanent boudoir. After a few days given to the joy of such an unexpected and hopeful reunion, Herbert wrote to Major C—— to announce his arrival, and to prepare him for a subsequent visit. He waited some days in great anxiety, and when he received the answer, brought it directly to me. I will not say that despair was written on his face—he was

of too strong and hopeful a temperament for that — but blank dismay and measureless astonishment certainly were, and not without cause. The writer first expressed his deep regret that any hope he had held out of a situation should have induced Herbert to give up his profession for a mere chance. He then stated that on his own return to England he had found the Government in one of its periodical fits of parsimony, and that far from being able to make fresh appointments, he had found his own salary cut down, and all supernumeraries inexorably dismissed. Such were the contents of Major C——'s letter. It was indeed a crushing blow. John Herbert could not but feel that his five years of tossing about the world in various climates had been absolutely lost, so far as being settled in life was concerned, and he could not but feel also that he had again to begin the great battle of life, with pros-

pects of success much diminished by the fact of his being now nearly twenty-six years of age.

Many long and anxious conversations ensued on the receipt of this letter. Both Herbert and Mary bravely bore up against the keen disappointment of all their newly-raised hopes. If the promised and coveted situation had been secured, there would have been nothing to prevent their almost immediate marriage; now all chance of this was thrown far into the background, and all that could be done was to trace out for Herbert some future plan of life to be begun with as little delay as possible. At the death of a near relative he would be entitled to a small portion of money amounting to five hundred pounds. This he now determined to sink for the present sum of two hundred pounds tendered by the Legal Assurance Society, in lieu of all future claims.

It was the end of July, 1870, before the necessary papers were all signed, and with the money thus raised, Herbert resolved at once to start for New York, where he proposed embarking his small capital in some business in which his thorough knowledge of French might be useful to him. He prudently expended a portion of his money in a good outfit and a gold watch.

Soon after his arrival in New York he wrote to tell us that at the same hotel where he boarded he had met with an old French gentleman recently from Paris, that they had gone into partnership and had opened a small establishment on Broadway for the sale of French wines and cigars. He wrote that they had every hope of doing well, numbers of foreigners buying from them, Frenchmen particularly coming in preference where they could freely converse in their own language. Just at this epoch the French and German

war broke out, and stretching as it were across the broad Atlantic, swept into its ruinous vortex the poor little business in New York on which dear friends at home were building up such hopes of success. Herbert and his partner found their circle of French customers disappear as if by magic, the greater part recalled to their own country to serve as soldiers. No German would enter a French store, the English and Americans gave them no encouragement, and amid the stirring events which now occupied the public mind, the utter failure of the small business on Broadway took place without exciting either notice or pity.

Herbert saved nothing from the wreck of affairs but his gold watch and his clothes. It was about this time that a casual acquaintance mentioned to John Herbert the "free-grant lands" of Muskoka, pointing them out as a wide and promising field for emigration.

He told him that he knew several families who had located themselves in that distant settlement, and who had found the land excellent, the conditions on which it was to be held easy of fulfilment, and the climate, though cold, incomparably healthy.

This intelligence, coming at a time when all was apparently lost, and his future prospects of the gloomiest kind, decided John Herbert to find his way to Muskoka and to apply for land there. He found a companion for his long journey in the person of a German who had come over with him in the same ship from Havre; and who, like himself, had entirely failed in bettering his condition in New York.

This poor young man had left a wife and child in Germany, and now that the war had broken out, having no vocation for fighting, he was afraid to venture back. Herbert sold his gold watch (for which he had given

twenty pounds) for fifty dollars, and his companion being much on a par as to funds, they joined their resources and started for Muskoka. After a very fatiguing journey, performed as much as possible on foot, but latterly partly by rail and partly by boat, they arrived at Bracebridge, where the German took up one hundred acres, Herbert preferring to wait and choose his land in spring; and it was agreed that during the winter, now beginning with great severity, they should work together and have everything in common.

Having engaged a man who knew the country well to go with them and point out the land they had just taken up, they bought a few necessary articles, such as bedding, tools, a cooking-stove, and a small supply of provisions, and started for the township in which they were about to locate. Once upon the land they set to work, cleared a spot of

ground, and with some assistance from their neighbours built a small shanty sufficient to shelter them for the winter. It was when they were tolerably settled that Herbert began to feel what a clog and a hindrance his too hastily formed partnership was likely to be. Feeble in body and feeble in mind, his companion became every day more depressed and home-sick. At last he ceased entirely from doing any work, which threw a double portion upon Herbert, who had in addition to do all commissions, and to fetch the letters from the distant post-office in all weathers.

Poor Wilhelm could do nothing but smoke feebly by the stove, shudder at the cold now becoming intense, and bemoan his hard fate. He was likewise so timid that his own shadow frightened him, and he could not bear to be left alone in the shanty. Herbert had a narrow escape of being shot by him one night on his return, rather late, from the

post-office. Wilhelm, hearing footsteps, in his fright took down from the wall Herbert's double-barrelled gun, which was kept always loaded, and was vainly trying to point it in the right direction, out of the door, when Herbert entered to find him as pale as death, and with limbs shaking to that degree that fortunately he had been unable to cock the gun.

It was indeed hard to be tied down to such a companionship. Herbert himself suffered severely from the cold of the Canadian climate, coming upon him as it did after some years' residence in India, but he never complained, and his letters home to Mary and all of us spoke of hopeful feelings and undiminished perseverance. He has often told us since that he never left the shanty without a strong presentiment that on his return he should find it in flames, so great was the carelessness of his companion in blowing

about the lighted ashes from his pipe. For this reason he always carried in the belt he wore round him, night and day, his small remainder of money and all his testimonials and certificates. A great part of his time was occupied in snaring rabbits and shooting an occasional bird or squirrel with which to make soup for his invalid companion. He used to set his snares overnight and look at them the first thing in the morning. One bitter cold morning he went out as usual to see if anything had been caught, leaving Wilhelm smoking by the stove. He returned to find the shanty in flames and his terrified companion crying, screaming, and wringing his hands. Herbert called to him in a voice of thunder, "The powder!" The frightened fool pointed to the half-burnt shanty, into which Herbert madly dashed, and emerged, half smothered, with a large carpet-bag already smouldering, in which,

among all his best clothes, he had stored away his entire stock of gunpowder in canisters. He hurled the carpet-bag far off into a deep drift of snow, by which prompt measure he probably saved his own life and his companion's, who seemed quite paralysed by fear. He then attempted to stop the fire by cutting away the burning rafters, but all his efforts were useless ; hardly anything was saved but one trunk, which he dragged out at once though it was beginning to burn.

The tools, the bedding, the working-clothes, and most of his good outfit were consumed, and at night he went to bed at a kind neighbour's who had at once taken him in, feeling too truly that he was again a ruined man.

One blessing certainly accrued to him from this sweeping misfortune. He for ever got rid of his helpless partner, who at once left the settlement, leaving Herbert again a free

agent. Necessity compelled him now to do what he had never done before—to write home for assistance. His letter found his eldest sister in a position to help him, as she had just sunk her own portion in the same manner that he had done, not for her own benefit, but to assist members of the family who were in difficulties. She sent him at once fifty pounds, and with the possession of this sum all his prospects brightened.

He left the scene of his late disaster, took up one hundred acres of land for himself and another one hundred in the name of Mary Lennox, making sure that she would eventually come out to him. He set hard to work chopping and clearing a few acres, which, as the spring opened, he cropped judiciously. He then called a "bee," which was well attended, and raised the walls of a good large log-house, the roof of which he shingled entirely himself in a masterly manner. For stock he

bought two cows and some chickens; and then wrote to Mary, telling of his improved prospects, and asking her if, when he was more fully settled, she would consent to share his lot in this far-off corner of the earth. At this time Mary was on a visit to me, having been allowed, for the first time, to accept my warm invitation. All her family were at the sea-side in England, having left during the French war.

I have often said that a special Providence certainly watched over Herbert and Mary. It did seem most extraordinary that just at this particular time a married sister of John Herbert, with her husband and children, had suddenly determined to join him in Muskoka. The reason was this: Mr. C——, her husband, was the classical and mathematical professor in a large French academy; but years of scholastic duties and close attention to books had so undermined his health that he was

quite unable to continue the exercise of his profession; indeed, the medical men consulted by him gave it as their opinion that nothing but an entire change of climate and occupation, and a complete abstinence from all studious pursuits, together with an outdoor life, would give him the slightest chance of recovery. Herbert was written to and authorised to take up land for them near his own, and it was settled that they were to sail in the end of July.

Now came my time for persuasion and influence. I opened a correspondence with Mary's father, who had recently received an explicit and manly letter from Herbert, with which he was much pleased. I represented to Mr. Lennox that this was no longer the "boy-and-girl love" (to quote his own words) of five years ago, but a steady affection, which had been severely tested by trouble, difficulty, opposition, and separation; that no future

opportunity could ever be so favourable as the present one for his daughter going out to her future husband under the protection and guardianship of a family soon to become her relations, and who would, in everything, watch over her interest and comfort. In short, I left nothing unsaid that could make a favourable impression, willingly conceding to his paternal feelings that it was, in a worldly point of view, a match falling short of his just expectations for his beautiful and accomplished child.

When two or three letters had passed between us, we agreed that Mary should go over at once to her family, and join her personal influence to my special pleading.

I waited with great anxiety for her answer. At length it came. Her family had consented. Fortunately she was just of age; and as she remained steadfast in her attachment, they agreed with me that it would be

best for her to go out with her future sister-in-law. Mary wrote to Mrs. C——, gratefully accepting her offer of chaperonage, and we despatched the joyful news to Herbert; but unfortunately named a date for their probable arrival which proved incorrect, as their vessel sailed from London two or three weeks before the expected time. This we shall see was productive of much temporary annoyance.

I pass over all the details of their voyage and subsequent journey, and now take up the narrative in Mrs. C——'s words, telling of their arrival at Mary's future home:

"It was about noon of a burning day in August when the stage-wagon in which we came from Utterson turned out of the road into the Bush. After going some little way in a dreadful narrow track, covered with stumps, over which the wagon jolted fearfully, we were told to get down, as the driver could not go any farther with safety to the

horses; and we therefore paid and dismissed him.

"We soon came to a shanty by the road-side, the owner of which met us and offered to be our guide. He evidently knew to whom we were going, but the perplexed and doubtful expression of his face when he caught sight of our party was most amusing. He looked from one to the other, and then burst out, in quite an injured tone, 'But nothing is ready for you; the house even is not finished. Mr. Herbert knows nothing of your coming so soon; he told me this morning that he did not expect you for three weeks! What will he do?' The poor man, a great friend and ally of Herbert's, appeared quite angry at our ill-timed arrival; but we explained to him that we should only be too thankful for any kind of shelter, being dreadfully wearied with our long journey, and the poor children crying from heat,

fatigue, and the attacks of the mosquitoes.

"Charles now proposed going in advance of us, to prepare Herbert for our arrival. He walked quickly on, and, entering the clearing, caught sight of Herbert, hard at work in the burning sun, covered with dust and perspiration, and, in fact, barely recognisable, being attired in a patched suit of common working-clothes, which he had snatched from the burning shanty, with his toes also peeping out of a pair of old boots with soles partly off.

"On first seeing his brother-in-law, every vestige of colour left his face, so great was his emotion, knowing that we must be close at hand. To rush into the house, after a few words of explanation, to make a brief toilet, greatly aided by a bucket of water and plenty of soap, to attire himself in a most becoming suit of cool brown linen, and, finally, to place

on his hastily-brushed head a Panama hat, which we had often admired, was the work of little more than a quarter of an hour; and, to Charles' great amusement, the scrubby, dirty-looking workman he had greeted, stepped forward in the much-improved guise of a handsome and aristocratic-looking young planter.

"In the meantime, our guide having brought us within sight of the outer fence, hastily took his leave, hardly waiting to receive our thanks. Mary and I have often laughed since at his great anxiety to get away from us, which we know now was partly from delicate reluctance to intrude upon our first interview, but a great deal more from his horror at the state in which he knew things to be at the house.

"Poor Herbert, when he reached us, could hardly speak. After one fond and grateful embrace of his darling, and a most kind and

affectionate welcome to the children and myself, he conducted us to the house. Although his neighbour had prepared us for disappointment, yet I must own that we felt unutterable dismay when we looked around us.

"The house was certainly a good large one, but it was a mere shell; nothing but the walls and the roof were up, and even the walls were neither chinked nor mossed, so that we could see daylight between all the logs. The floor was not laid down, but in the middle of it an excavation had been begun for a cellar, so that there was a yawning hole, in which for some weeks my children found a play-closet and a hiding-place for all their rubbish.

"Furniture there was none, the only seats and tables being Herbert's one trunk, partly burned, saved from the fire, and a few flour-barrels. There was no semblance of a bed, except a little hay in a corner, a few sacks,

and an old blanket. Some milk-pans and a few plates and mugs completed the articles in this truly Irish cabin, of which Herbert did the honours with imperturbable grace and self-possession. He made no useless apologies for the existing discomforts; he told us simply what he meant the house to be as soon as he could get time to finish it; and in the interim he looked about with as much satisfaction as if his log-house had been Windsor Castle, and we the crowned heads to whom he was displaying its glories.

"We found the larder as scantily-furnished as the house; but Herbert made us a few cakes and baked them in the oven; he boiled some potatoes, and milked the cow, so that we were not long without some refreshment.

"For sleeping we curtained off a corner of the room with our travelling-cloaks and shawls, and made a tolerable bed with bundles of hay and a few sacks to cover us.

We had brought nothing with us but our hand-baskets, so were obliged to lie down in most of our clothes, the nights beginning to be very chilly, and the night air coming in freely through the unchinked walls. We were, however, truly thankful this first night to put the children to bed quite early, and to retire ourselves, for we were thoroughly wearied and worn out. The two gentlemen lay down, just as they were, in the far corner of the room on some hay; and if we were chilly and uncomfortable, I think they must have been more so.

"The first night we were undisturbed; but on the next, we were hardly asleep when we were awoke by a horrid and continuous hissing, which seemed to come from the hay of our improvised bed. We all started up in terror, the poor frightened children crying loudly. The gentlemen, armed with sticks, beat the hay of the beds about, and scattered

it completely. They soon had the pleasant sight of a tolerable-sized snake gliding swiftly from our corner, and making its escape under the door into the clearing, where Herbert found and killed it next morning. We must indeed have been tired to sleep soundly, as we all certainly did, after the beds had been re-arranged.

"The next day Mr. C—— proposed walking to Utterson, to purchase a few necessary articles of food; and Herbert went on to Bracebridge, to look for a clergyman to perform the marriage ceremony between him and Mary. As to waiting for our luggage, and for the elegant bridal attire which had been so carefully packed by loving hands, we all agreed that it would be ridiculous; and dear Mary, like a true heroine, accepted the discomforts of her situation bravely, and, far from uttering a single complaint, made the best of everything.

"Both Mr. C—— and myself had fits of irrepressible vexation at the state of affairs; but as we could in no way help ourselves, we thought it best to be silent, and to hurry on the building of a log-house for ourselves, which we at once did.

"The very day after our arrival, Mary and I undertook the work of housekeeping, taking it by turns day and day about. We found it most fatiguing, the days being so hot and the mosquitoes so tormenting. Moreover, the stove being placed outside, we were exposed to the burning sun every time we went near it, and felt quite ill in consequence.

"When Herbert returned from Bracebridge, he told us that the Church of England clergyman being away at Toronto, he had engaged the services of the Wesleyan minister whose chapel he had sometimes attended, and that gentleman had promised to come as

soon as possible, and to bring with him a proper and respectable witness.

"The day of his coming being left uncertain, Mary and I were kept in a continual state of terror and expectation, and at such a time we felt doubly the annoyance of not being able to get from Toronto even the trunks containing our clothes. In vain we tried to renovate our soiled and travel-stained dresses; neither brushing, nor shaking, nor sponging could alter their unmistakably shabby appearance, and it required some philosophy to be contented. It was worse for poor Mary than for any one else; and I felt quite touched when I saw her carefully washing and ironing the lace frill from the neck of her dress, and then arranging it again as nicely as possible.

"Two days passed, and on the afternoon of the third we had put the poor children to sleep, and were lying down ourselves, quite

overcome with the heat, when my husband entered hastily to tell us that the Rev. Mr. W—— had arrived to perform the marriage ceremony, and had brought with him as witness a goodnatured store-keeper, who had left his business to oblige Herbert, with whom he had had many dealings.

"Herbert, who had dressed himself every day, not to be taken by surprise, was quite ready, and kept them in conversation while Mary and I arranged our hair, washed the children's faces and hands, and, as well as we could, prepared the room. When all was ready they were summoned, and in making their introductory bows, both our visitors nearly backed themselves into the yawning cavern in the middle of the floor, which, in our trepidation, we had forgotten to point out.

"Very impressively did the good minister perform the marriage service; and at its

close he addressed to the young couple a few words of serious and affectionate exhortation, well suited to the occasion.

"He begged them to remember, that living as they were about to do in the lonely forest, far from the public ordinances of religion, they must give the more heed to their religious duties, and to the study of the Word of God, endeavouring to live not for this world only, but for that other world to which young and old were alike hastening.

"Herbert looked his very best on this momentous occasion, and, in spite of all disadvantages of dress and difficulties of position, dear Mary looked most sweet and beautiful, and created, I am sure, quite a fatherly interest in the heart of the good old clergyman, himself the father of a numerous family. We could offer the clergyman and witness

no refreshment; and when they were gone, our wedding-feast consisted of a very salt ham-bone, dough dumplings, and milk-and-water."

So ends Mrs. C——'s narrative, to which I shall append but few observations. All went well from the day of the wedding, and on that day the sun went down on a happy couple. Doubt, anxiety, separation — all these were at an end; and, for weal or woe, John Herbert and Mary Lennox were indissolubly united. Trials and troubles might await them in the future; but for the present, youth, health, hope, and love were beckoning them onward with ineffable smiles.

The luggage soon arrived, and comfortable bedding superseded hay and snakes. Mr. and Mrs. C—— removed as soon as possible into their own log-house, leaving

our young couple to the privacy of their home.

Herbert worked early and late to finish his house, and partitioned off a nice chamber for Mary, which was prettily furnished and ornamented with cherished books, and gifts, and keepsakes from dear and distant friends. The wealthier members of Mary's family sent substantial tokens of goodwill, and many pretty and useful gifts came from the loving sister, who begins to talk of coming out herself.

Mary's parents, cheered and comforted by the happy and contented tone breathed in her letters, ceased to regret having sanctioned the marriage; and, to crown all, a little son in due time made his appearance, to cement still further the love of his parents and to concentrate a very large portion of it in his own little person.

Here let the curtain drop. From time to

time I may have had misgivings, but have long been fully satisfied that a blessing has rested on my well-meant endeavours to secure the happiness of two young and loving hearts.

ANECDOTES OF THE CANADIAN BUSH,

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

TOLD ME BY THE WIFE OF AN OLD SETTLER.

ANECDOTES OF THE CANADIAN BUSH.

THIRTY years ago, when I went into the Bush, quite a young girl, with my newly-made husband, the part in which we settled was a complete wilderness. Our lot was taken up about thirty miles east of Belle Ewart, now quite a flourishing village, with the railway passing through it.

Our small log-house was perfectly isolated, as at that time we had not a single neighbour nearer to us than twelve miles; all was dense forest, with but a very faint imperfect track leading by degrees to the main road. Here

I passed the first years of my married life, encountering many hardships and enduring many troubles. By degrees my husband cleared and cultivated as much land as would supply our wants, though he never took heartily to the farming, not having been used to it, being by trade a gunsmith.

After several years, neighbours began to gather round us at the distance of two or three miles, and in time quite a settlement was formed. By one of these neighbours a few miles off I was invited to a wedding when my first baby was about a year old. My husband had a strong serviceable pony, but no buggy, and it was settled that I should ride on the pony with baby on my lap, and my husband walk at the side.

When we were within a mile of our destination we noticed a tree fallen across the path, which was a narrow track with forest on both sides, and we also saw that the tree

had a bushy green top to it. We arrived at our friend's, partook of the wedding festivities, and started on our return home at ten o'clock on a bright starlight night.

As we approached the fallen tree over which the pony had stepped quite quietly in the morning, the poor animal began to shiver all over, to snort, to caper about the road in a most extraordinary manner, and appeared too frightened to move on.

I whispered to my husband that I saw the green top of the tree moving, and that I had better get off with the baby for fear of the pony starting and throwing us off. He took me down, and we stepped across the tree, dragging the pony after us with the greatest difficulty; hardly had we got to the other side when from the bushy head of the tree out walked a great brown bear, who certainly looked very much astonished at our little party.

We were terribly frightened, expecting him to attack the pony, but he stood quite still. We thought it better to move on, slowly at first, and afterwards more quickly as we got nearer home. He followed us for more than a mile, indeed till we were quite in sight of our own door, then finding himself near a human habitation he gave one fearful growl before gliding off into the forest, and we lost sight of him.

When we were safely housed, and the poor pony well fed and locked into his little shed, I felt nearly dead with terror and fatigue.

My next interview with Bruin was in a buggy, three years afterwards, in which I was being driven homeward by my husband. This time we had two children with us, and had been to a considerable distance to purchase articles at a newly-established store, which could not be procured nearer. We were more than six miles from home, when the

pony (the same mentioned before) began to be greatly agitated, refused to go on, then tried to start off, and gave loud snorts of distress.

My husband got out and stood at the pony's head, holding him firmly to prevent his starting. The light was very dim in the shade of the Bush, but we both saw something large creeping along the edge of the forest next to where my husband stood; he had no weapon with him but his woodman's knife and a thick stake picked up from the roadside. Presently a bear came slowly out of the forest, and advanced into the middle of the road at some distance from us, as if preparing for fight. I was terribly frightened, but my husband stood quite still, holding in the horse, but keeping in full view the bear, knowing what a terror they have of man.

After steadily looking at each other for at least five minutes—minutes of suspense and

agony to us, Bruin evidently understood the difficulties of his position, and quietly slunk away into the Bush on the other side of the road; and we were glad to get home in safety.

At another time, I had a visit from a lynx; but as I certainly invited him myself, I could not be surprised at his coming as he did, almost close to my cottage door. My husband had been gone for two days on important business to a village a long way off, and on this particular evening I fully expected him home.

We were living in quite a small shanty till we could build a larger house; it had a fireplace on the floor, and an open chimney; the room was very low, and easy of access from the outside. I was living then with my three little children and a young sister of fourteen who helped me to take care of them. As it was getting dusk I thought I heard a

human voice distinctly calling from the forest, "Hallo!" I went to the door and immediately answered in the same tone, "Hallo!" making sure that it was my husband, who finding the track very faint from the gloom of the forest, wanted our voices to guide him right. The voice replied to me. I hallooed again, and this went on for some minutes, the sound drawing nearer and nearer, till at length advancing from the edge of the forest, not my husband, but a good-sized lynx, attracted by my answering call, stood quite in front of the cottage—nothing more than the width of a broad road between us and it.

The children, most fortunately, were playing inside, but my sister and myself distinctly saw the eyes of the creature like globes of fire, and in the stillness of the evening we could hear its teeth gnashing as if with anxiety to attack us. Fortunately, through the open door of the shanty the savage ani-

mal could see the blazing fire on the hearth, and came no nearer.

We hastily shut the door, and my poor little sister began to cry and bemoan the danger we were in:

"Oh! the roof was so low, and it would clamber up and drop down the chimney, or it would spring through the window, or push open the door," etc.

I begged her not to frighten the poor children who were playing in a corner, but at once to put more wood on the fire and make a good blaze. I now found that we had hardly any wood without going to the stack outside, which luckily was very close to the door, and fearing that my husband might at any moment return, and be pounced upon unawares, I made my sister light a candle, and opening the door placed her at it, telling her to move the light about so as to bewilder the lynx. Still the dreadful animal

remained, uttering cries at intervals, but not moving a step. As quickly as I could I got plenty of wood, as much as I thought would last the night, and very gladly we again shut the door. We now piled up wood on the hearth till there was a great blaze, and no doubt the showers of sparks which must have gone out at the chimney-top greatly alarmed the lynx; it now gave a number of fierce angry cries and went off into the forest, the sound becoming fainter and fainter till it died away.

My husband did not return till the evening of the next day, and he had seen nothing of our unwelcome visitor.

At the time I speak of, the woods of Muskoka were quite infested with wolves, which, however, were only dangerous when many were together. A single wolf is at all times too cowardly to attack a man. My husband knew this, and therefore if he heard a single

howl he took no notice, but if he heard by the howling that a pack was in the forest near at hand, he went on his road very cautiously, looking from side to side so as to secure a tree for climbing into should they attack him.

The Canadian wolf has not the audacity of the prairie wolf; should it drive a traveller to the shelter of a tree it will circle round it all night, but at the dawn of day is sure to disappear.

A neighbour's child, a boy of twelve years old, had a narrow escape from four or five of them, having mistaken them for dogs. It was his business to feed the animals, and having neglected one morning to cut the potatoes small enough, a young calf was unfortunately choked from a piece too large sticking in her throat. The dead calf was laid under a fence not far from the shanty, and the boy having been severely scolded for

his carelessness, remained sulkily within doors by himself.

He was engaged in peeling a long stick for an ox-whip, when he heard, as he thought, the barking of some dogs over the dead carcase of the calf; he rushed out with the long stick in his hand, and saw four or five animals busily tearing off the flesh from the calf; without a moment's reflection he ran in among them, shouting and hallooing with all his might, and so valiantly laid about him with his stick that they all ran off to the covert of the forest, where they turned; and he heard a series of yells and howls which made his blood run cold, for he knew the sound well, and saw that they were wolves and not dogs whose repast he had interrupted. He said, that so great was his terror that he could hardly get back to the shanty and fasten the door.

All the Canadian wild animals are timid;

they only begin to prowl about at dusk; they never attempt to enter a dwelling, and have a salutary dread of attacking a man; if attacked themselves they will fight fiercely, and a she-bear with cubs is always dangerous.

Since the time I speak of, the settlements all over the district have become very numerous, and the quantity of land cleared up is so great that the wild animals keep retreating farther and farther into the recesses of the forest; and even the trappers by profession find their trade much less lucrative than it was, they have so much more difficulty in finding game in any quantity.

It is hardly possible to make people understand, who are unacquainted with Bush-life, what the early settlers in Muskoka and other parts had to suffer. Young creatures with their babies were left alone in situations which in more settled countries call for the greatest care and tenderness, and in desolate

solitudes where they were far from all human help.

Three weeks before the birth of my fourth child I became so ill with erysipelas that my husband thought he had better go to the place where my parents lived—more than twenty miles off, and bring back one of my sisters to nurse me. He started after breakfast, and soon after he left I became so dreadfully ill that I could not lift my head from the pillow, or indeed turn myself in the bed.

My children, of the respective ages of two, four, and six, were playing about, and as I lay watching them my terror was extreme lest one of them should fall into the fire; I can hardly tell how they fed themselves, or got to bed, or got up the next morning, for by that time I could move neither hand nor foot, and was in dreadful pain. Thus I lay all day, all night, and all the next day till the

evening, when my husband returned with one of my sisters. After that I became delirious, and had hardly recovered when my child was born.

As soon as our land was well cleared up and a good house built, my husband sold the property and bought a piece of ground at Belle Ewart, where we have lived ever since, as his health would not allow him to continue farming.

I was always afraid when living in the Bush of the children being lost when they began to run about. The Bush at that time was so wild, and so few paths through it, that there was every fear of children straying once they turned off the narrow track.

A poor little boy, of eight years old, living some miles from us, was lost for more than a week, and only by a miracle was found alive. There was a windfall caused by a hurricane, not very far from his father's shanty. It was

not very broad, but extended in length for more than twenty miles, distinctly marking out the path of the tempest as it swept through the Bush. All this windfall was overgrown with blackberry-bushes, and at this time of year (the autumn) there were quantities of fruit, and parties used to be made for picking them, with a view to preserving.

Our poor little wanderer having strayed alone one morning and reached the windfall, began to eat the berries with great delight, and kept going about from bush to bush, till when it got late he became so bewildered that he could no longer tell in which direction his home lay. Days went by; he was missed and hunted for, but misled by some imaginary trace the first parties went in quite a wrong direction.

The child had no sustenance but the fruit; at length he became too much exhausted to

pick, and, as he described it, only felt sleepy. Providentially, in passing an uprooted tree, he saw underneath a large hole, and creeping in found it warm, soft, and dry, being apparently well lined with moss and leaves. Here he remained till found by a party who fortunately took the direction of the windfall, accompanied by a sagacious dog used to tracking bears and other game.

The parties searching would have passed the tree, which was a little out of the track, and many others of the kind lying about, but seeing the dog suddenly come to a stop and begin sniffing and barking they made a careful examination; they found the poor child in his concealment almost at the point of death, and so scratched by the brambles and stained by the juice of the berries as to be searcely recognisable. They had had the precaution to take with them a bottle of new milk, and very carefully they put down his

throat a little at a time till he was able to swallow freely.

Now comes the extraordinary part of the story. The nights were already very chilly; when asked on his recovery if he had not felt the cold, he replied, "Oh no!" and said that every night at dusk a large brown dog came and lay down by him, and was so kind and good-natured that it let him creep quite close to it, and put his arms round it, and that in this way he slept quite warm. He added, that the brown dog went away every morning when it was light. Of course, as there was no large dog answering to this description in any of the adjacent settlements, and as the poor child was evidently in a bear's den, people could not but suppose that it was a *bear* who came to his side every evening, and that the animal, moved by some God-given instinct, refrained from injuring the forlorn child. Years afterwards this boy used to

talk of the "kind brown dog" who had kept him so nice and warm in his hole in the tree.

My last fright from a bear was only a few years ago, when I was driving a married daughter home, who had been with me to pay a visit to a friend in the Bush twelve miles off. We had one of her little children with us, and were driving slowly, though the road was a good one, as the horse had been many miles that day.

It was getting dusk, and the road, being narrow like all Bush roads, was very gloomy. We were talking quietly of the visit we had just paid, when from the thick top of a tree overhanging the roadside, dropped down a large bear, who just grazed the back of the buggy in his fall. I had but a glimpse of him, as hearing the noise I turned my head for an instant; my daughter's wild shriek of alarm as she clutched her little one firmly, added to the growl of the bear, so frightened

our horse that he dashed off at full speed, and providentially meeting with no obstacle, never stopped till he reached the fence of my husband's clearing. Even when locked into the house for the night we could hardly fancy ourselves in safety.

The respectable person to whom I was indebted for the above anecdotes, and who was in the capacity of nurse-tender to the mistress of the hotel where I was staying, was much to my regret suddenly called away to a fresh situation, by which I lost many more of her interesting experiences, for as she truly said, numberless were the expedients by which the wives of the early settlers protected themselves and their little ones during the unavoidable absences of their husbands. The pleasant gentlemanly host of the hotel where I was staying at Bracebridge told me of his sitting entranced, when a little

child, at the feet of his old grandmother, to hear her stories of the wild beasts which abounded at the time of her first settlement in the Canadian wilderness.

Her husband belonged to an old and wealthy family in America, who, remaining loyal during the war of Independence, were driven over into Canada and all their property confiscated. They settled down, glad to be in safety in a wild unfrequented part; and whenever provisions were wanting, it was an affair of some days for the husband to go and return, the nearest settlement being fifty miles off.

Packs of wolves used to prowl about the log-hut as evening came on, and during the night the barking and howling was dreadful to hear; the only thing to keep them off was a large fire of pine-logs which his grandfather used to light of an evening as near the house as was consistent with safety. It depended

on which way the wind blew at which end of the log-hut the fire was made. When he went away on an expedition, he used to take out a large chink at each end of the house and leave his wife an immense pointed pole, with which, putting it through the chink-hole, she was enabled in safety to brand up the fire, that is to draw the logs together so as to last through the night.

Wolves have long disappeared into the depths of the forest; a chance one may now and then be heard of, but rarely in the vicinity of large clearings. The visits of bears are becoming more and more frequent, for Bruin is very partial to young pig, and does not disdain a good meal of ripe grain. The barley-patch in my clearing, as the corn began to ripen this summer, was very much trodden down by a bear whose tracks were plainly to be seen, and he was supposed to be located in a cedar-swamp on my land, as

every now and then he was seen, but always coming to or from that direction. One night we were roused from our sleep by a fearful noise of cattle-bells outside of the fence, and when we went out we found that there was a regular "stampede" of all the cattle in the immediate neighbourhood; cows, oxen, steers, were all tearing madly through the Bush towards a road at the other side of a deep gully near the edge of my lot. They were evidently flying from the pursuit of some wild animal.

Presently on the still night air rose a horrid fierce growl which was repeated at intervals two or three times, getting fainter in the distance till it quite died away. We all recognised the noise we had recently heard in France from the bears in a travelling show, only much fiercer and louder. My son, fully armed, started in pursuit, accompanied by a young friend armed also, but

though, guided by the noise, they went far down the road, they caught but one glimpse of Bruin in the moonlight as he disappeared down a deep gully and from thence into the Bush, where at night it would not have been safe to follow him.

Hoping that towards morning he might, as is usually the case, return the same way, they seated themselves on a log by the road-side close to the edge of the forest that they might not be palpably in the bear's sight, and there they remained for some hours till the cold of the dawn warned them to come home, being very lightly clad. The very next evening my son and his friend were pistol-shooting at a mark fixed on a trèe at the end of the clearing, when "Black Bess," the dog, gave tongue and rushed into the forest on the side next the cedar-swamp. Guided by her barking the two gentlemen followed quickly, and this time had a full

view in broad daylight of a large brown bear in full flight, but never got within shooting distance. Unluckily the dog, though a good one for starting game, was young and untrained, and had not the sense to head the animal back so as to enable her master to get within range. This bear baffled all the arts of the settlers to get at it, and settlers with cows and oxen were mostly afraid to set traps for fear of accidents to their cattle.

A short time ago a settler living on the Muskoka Road was returning to his home by a short cut through the Bush, when he came suddenly upon a she-bear with two cubs. He had no weapon but a small pocket-knife, and hoped to steal past unobserved, but in a moment the beast attacked him, knocked his knife out of his hand and tore his arm from the shoulder to the wrist. He would probably have been killed but that his shouts brought up a party of men working on the

Government road at no great distance, and Mrs. Bruin was only too glad to get safe off with her progeny into the depths of the Bush.

Two or three bears and a lynx were killed in the fall of 1873, in the vicinity of Bracebridge, and one within a mile of the village, on the road to the "South Falls," one of my favourite walks when I was staying there. There is, however, but little danger of meeting any wild animal in the broad daylight. The words of David in the 104th Psalm are as strictly true now as they were in his time: "The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens."

TERRA INCOGNITA;

OR,

THE WILDS OF MUSKOKA.

THE WILDS OF MUSKOKA.

IN reading the history of newly-settled countries and the rise and progress of mighty states, nothing is more interesting than to trace the wonderful and rapid results which spring from the smallest beginnings. In changing the wilderness into a fruitful land, we notice first the laborious efforts to raise the rude and coarse necessaries of daily life, then the struggles for convenience and comfort, then the gradual demand for the luxuries of a higher civilisa-

tion. These last can only be obtained by the growth and encouragement of the ornamental as well as useful arts; then comes the dawning of political power, till at length we see with amusement that the scattered hamlet has become a thriving village, the village a populous town, and the town expanded into a stately city, carrying wealth, commerce, and civilisation to the remotest parts of what a few years back was simply unbroken forest.

Such is the future which, under the fulfilment of certain conditions, we may confidently predict for the free-grant lands of Muskoka, to which the Canadian Government are making strenuous efforts to draw the tide of emigration. Nothing can well be more picturesque than the tract of country already embracing twelve townships which constitutes the district of Muskoka, so called, not from the poetical tradition of "clear skies," "no clouds," which is by no means applicable to this variable

climate, but more probably from Musquoto, the name of a Chippewa chief, which has been handed down to the present time, though every trace of Indian occupation has long been effaced.

Hill and dale, wood and water, a winding river, tributary streams, rapid waterfalls breaking the solitude with their wild music, the large Muskoka lake, smaller lakes on many of the lots; all these charms combine to form most beautiful scenery. Unfortunately the settlers, looking upon the trees as their natural enemies, hew them down with inexorable rancour, quite ignoring the fact that if they were to clear more judiciously, leaving here and there a clump of feathery balsams, or a broad belt of pine, spruce, maple, and birch, they would have some shelter for their crops from the destroying north-west wind, and some shade for their log-houses during the burning heat of summer.

Having been located in the township of Stephenson for more than two years, I am able to make some observations on the subject, and I find that as most of the settlers in my neighbourhood belong to the lower classes, they have but little sense of the beautiful in any shape, and no appreciation whatever of picturesque scenery. A settler of this class is perfectly satisfied with his own performance when he has cleared thirty or forty acres on his lot, leaving nothing so large as a gooseberry-bush to break the dreary uniformity of the scene.

The London of Muskoka is the pretty thriving town of Bracebridge. I say pretty, advisedly, for its situation on the river Muskoka is beautiful, the scenery highly varied, the environs abounding in lovely walks and choice bits of landscape which an artist might delight to portray.

Ten years ago the first adventurous settler

built his log-hut on the hill south of the present town between the pretty falls at the entrance and the South Falls at three miles' distance. All was then unbroken forest, its solitude only disturbed by occasional visits from a few scattered Chippewa Indians or lonely trappers in pursuit of the game, more and more driven northward by the advancing tide of civilisation.

A few statistics of Bracebridge at the close of the present year (1873) will show what progress has been made in every department.

Population - - - - -	800
Children attending public schools -	250
Children attending four Sunday schools	200
Number of churches - - - -	4
Clergymen - - - - -	6
Medical doctors - - - -	2
Barristers, attorneys, conveyancers -	7
Stores - - - - - -	15
In course of erection - - - -	5
Hotels - - - - - -	6
Printing-offices - - - - -	2

Saw-mills - - - - -	4
Grist and flour mill - - - -	1
Carding mill and woollen factory - -	1
Shoe shops - - - - -	3
Butchers' shops - - - -	3
Blacksmiths' shops - - - -	4
Bakers' shops - - - - -	4

Besides these are many wheelwrights, carpenters, joiners, etc. The gentleman who wrote to the *Daily News* in England from Huntsville in this neighbourhood, most unduly disparaged the little town of Bracebridge, but as he visited Muskoka in exceptionally bad weather at the close of a long-continued rainy season, and as his stay in the district was limited to a few days at most, his opinion can hardly be received as gospel truth. His dismay at the mud in the streets and the general badness of the roads was very natural in a stranger to this part of Canada. We certainly are greatly in want of assistance from some McAdam, and we

have every hope that improvement in our roads, as in everything else, will reach us in time.

The climate of Muskoka is most favourable to health, even to invalids, provided they have no consumptive tendencies. For all pulmonary complaints it is most unsuitable, on account of the very sudden atmospheric changes. The short summer, with its inevitable accompaniment of tormenting mosquitoes, is burning hot, and the winter, stretching sometimes over seven months of the year, is intensely cold, and both these extremes render it a trying climate for consumptive patients. The air, however, is pure, clear, and bracing, and nervous and dyspeptic invalids soon lose many of their unpleasant sensations. A gentleman who formed one of our little colony when we came out in 1871, has to thank the air of Muskoka for the entire

renovation of his health. His constitution was very much shattered by over-working his brain during a long course of scholastic pursuits, and as his only chance of recovery, he was ordered an entire change of climate and out-door occupation instead of study.

The Bush-life and the pure air worked miracles; his recovery was complete, and he has been now, for some months, in holy orders as a clergyman of the Church of England. He is able to preach three times every Sabbath day, and to perform all the arduous duties of an out-station without undue fatigue or exhaustion. The same gentleman's eldest child has derived as much benefit as his father from the change of climate. At five years old, when he was brought to Muskoka, he was most delicate, and had from infancy held life by a most precarious tenure; but at the present time he

is a very fine specimen of healthy and robust childhood.

The twelve townships of Muskoka are increasing their population every day, from the steady influx of emigrants from the old country. It is most desirable that an Emigrant's Home should be established in Bracebridge for the purpose of giving gratuitous shelter and assistance to the poorer class of emigrants, and sound and reliable advice to all who might apply for it. In my "Plea for Poor Emigrants," contributed to the *Free Grant Gazette*, I earnestly endeavoured to draw public attention to this great want, and I still hope that when the necessary funds can be raised, something of the sort will be provided. Government has thrown open the free-grant lands to every applicant above the age of eighteen years; each one at that age may take up a lot of one hundred acres; the

head of a family is allowed two hundred. The person located is not absolute master of the land till the end of five years from the date of his or her location, when, if the stipulated conditions have been fulfilled, the patent is taken out, and each holder of a lot becomes a freehold proprietor. The conditions are simply that he shall have cleared and got under cultivation fifteen acres, and have raised a log-house of proper dimensions.

Government found that some restrictions were absolutely necessary, as unprincipled speculators took up lots which they never meant to cultivate or settle on, but for the fraudulent purpose of felling and selling off the pine timber, and then leaving the country.

When a person has it in view to come to Muskoka, let him as much as possible abstain from reading any of the books published on

the subject. Without accusing those who write them of wilfully saying the thing that is not, I must say that the warmth of their colouring and the unqualified praise they bestow greatly misleads ignorant people.

The poor emigrant comes out to Muskoka firmly believing it to be a veritable "Land of Promise" flowing with milk and honey, an El Dorado where the virgin soil only requires a slight scratching to yield cent. per cent. His golden visions speedily vanish; he finds the climate variable, the crops uncertain, the labour very hard, and Bush-farming for the first four or five years very uphill work. If, however, instead of yielding to discouragement he steadily perseveres, he may feel assured of ultimately attaining at least a moderate degree of success. It is also necessary for a settler in Muskoka to get out of his head once and for ever all his traditions of old-country farming. Bush-

farming is different in every respect; the seasons are different, the spring seldom opens till the middle of May, and between that time and the end of September, all the farm-work of sowing, reaping, and storing away must be completed. The winters are mostly occupied in chopping. The best way for obtaining an insight into Bush-farming is for the newly-arrived emigrant to hire himself out to work on another person's ground for at least a year before finally settling upon his own.

This is his wisest plan, even should he bring out (which is not generally the case) sufficient capital to start with. We sadly feel the want in our settlement of a few farmers of better education, and of a higher range of intelligence, who, having a little experience as well as money, might leaven the ignorance which occasions so many mistakes and so much failure among our poorer

brethren in the Bush. It has been said that "a donation of a hundred acres is a descent into barbarism," but few would be inclined to endorse this opinion who had witnessed, as I have done for two years, the patient daily toil, the perseverance under difficulties and privations, the self-denial, the frugality, the temperance, and the kind helpfulness of one another, found in the majority of our settlers. A black sheep may now and then be found in every flock, and it is undeniable that the very isolation of each settler on his own clearing, and the utter absence of all conventional restraint, engenders something of lawlessness, of contempt for public opinion, and occasionally of brutality to animals, but only I am bound to say in the ungenial and depraved natures of those whose conduct *out* of the Bush would be equally reprehensible.

After all the pros and the cons of emigration to Muskoka have been fully discussed,

one fact stands prominently forward for the consideration of the labouring classes of Great Britain.

The free grants offer an inestimable boon to the agricultural and the manufacturing population. The workmen in both these classes spend the prime of their health and strength in working for others, and after suffering with perhaps wives and families incredible hardships from cold and hunger, which cannot be kept away by insufficient wages, have nothing to look forward to in their declining years but the tender mercies of their parish workhouse, or the precarious charity of their former masters. In emigrating to Muskoka they may indeed count upon hard work, much privation, and many struggles and disappointments, but they may be equally certain that well-directed energy, unflagging industry and patient perseverance, will after a few years insure them a compe-

tence, if not affluence, and will enable them to leave to their children an inheritance and a position which would have been almost impossible of attainment in the old country.

A PLEA FOR POOR EMIGRANTS.

A PLEA FOR POOR EMIGRANTS.

DURING a visit of some weeks to Bracebridge, at the close of last winter, I was much interested in watching the different parties of emigrants who came into the town, many of them with wives and families, some without, but all looking more or less weary and travel-worn. I noticed also in the countenances of many of the men a perplexed and uneasy expression, as if they hardly knew where to go or what to do next.

Who but must feel the deepest sympathy

with these poor wayfarers, whose troubles, far from ending when they have safely crossed the broad Atlantic, seem to begin afresh and to gather strength during the long and wearisome journey from Quebec to Muskoka.

All along the line are paid agents, who strive to turn the tide of emigration in any other direction than this district of Muskoka, and who perplex the tired traveller with recommendations to various places, and with no end of unsought advice.

Till very lately, Muskoka was but little known, and as a fitting place for emigration was greatly undervalued. I remember with some amusement that during my journey with my family from Quebec to Bracebridge, two years ago, it was sufficient in conversation to utter the cabalistic word "Muskoka," for us to be immediately treated to admonitory shakes of the head, shrugs of the

shoulders, uplifted hands, and very clearly expressed opinions that we were rushing to certain destruction.

Now, *we* emigrated with a definite purpose in view. We were bound to a specific locality, and were in fact coming to join members of the family who had preceded us; but the remarks addressed to us were anything but cheering, and it may be imagined what an effect similar discouragements must have upon the poorer class of emigrants, whose slender resources have been taxed to the utmost to bring them out at all—who feel that poverty renders the step they have taken irretrievable, and who arrive at Bracebridge full of doubts and fears as to their comfortable settlement and ultimate success.

Happy would it be for the emigrant, married or single, if his difficulties were ended by his safe arrival at Bracebridge; but such

is not the case. As in all communities there will be an admixture of worthless and designing characters, so in our thriving little town are to be found a few who lie in wait for the unwary, and throw temptation in the path of those who are not fortified by strong religious principle. Should an unmarried emigrant, a young man from the "old country"—with apparently a tolerable stock of money and clothes—arrive, he is at once followed and courted with professions of friendship, and on the plea of good fellowship is tempted to drink at the bars of the different hotels, and to join in the low gambling which seems unfortunately to be the special vice of Muskoka. Not till his money is all expended is the victim left to himself; and too often he has to begin his Bush-life penniless, or thankfully to engage in some job of hard work which will at least secure his daily bread.

The married emigrant likewise is often deceived and misled by people as ignorant as himself, who give him altogether false impressions of the value of his land, the price of labour and provisions, the tools he ought to buy, the crops he ought to put in, and many other details essential to his success in Bush-farming.

I speak from experience in saying that nothing can exceed the kindness and urbanity of the Commissioner of Crown Lands to all and every one going to his office for the purpose of taking up land; but it would be obviously impossible for this gentleman, and incompatible with the public duties of himself and his assistants, to enter minutely into the wants and requirements of each individual emigrant, or to give that detailed advice and assistance which in many cases is so absolutely necessary.

Could not much be done, and many evils

be obviated, by the establishment of an "Emigrant Home" in the town, to which all incoming emigrants might be directed by large printed cards conspicuously hung up in the bar of every hotel?

The superintendent of the home ought to be a man of some education, of sound common sense, of large Christian sympathy, one who would feel it a pleasure as well as a duty to smooth the path of the weary travellers who accepted the gratuitous shelter provided for them. Surely for such a desirable object as the one in view, the sanction and co-operation of the Dominion Government might be obtained, and a sum of money granted to establish the home, which might then be kept up by small annual subscriptions from the wealthier inhabitants of Bracebridge, whose commercial prosperity must so greatly depend upon the settlements beyond and about it. Numbers of emigrants

come in every year who have left behind them in the old country dear friends and relations, who only wait for their favourable verdict upon the promised land, to come out and join them.

Would it not be well that emigrants should be enabled to write home truthfully and gratefully that they were met on their arrival at Bracebridge with brotherly kindness, Christian sympathy, shelter for their wives and families, sound reliable advice as to their future course, and help and encouragement suited to their especial need? It may be urged that pecuniary assistance and gratuitous shelter for his wife and children would impair the self-respect of the emigrant, and place him in the light of a pauper to himself and others.

I do not think this would be the case. It appears to me that an emigrant, arriving as too many do with his means utterly ex-

hausted and with little but starvation in view for his family and himself, would have his British feelings of sturdy independence considerably modified, and would be willing to accept of the help tendered to him, not as a charitable dole from those above him in rank, but as a willing offering from those who for their Saviour's sake acknowledge a common brotherhood with every suffering member of the great human family. Nor would the establishment of such a home at all interfere with the legitimate profits of the hotel-keepers.

From personal observation, I can testify that in numerous cases they are called upon to give, and do most liberally give, food and shelter gratuitously to those who cannot pay. Of course such a plan as this would have to be matured and carried out by wise heads and efficient hands. I can only humbly offer a suggestion which seems to me worthy of

consideration, and I cannot end my few observations better than with the refrain of a deservedly popular song:

"Then do your best for one another,
Making life a pleasant dream;
Help a worn and weary brother
Pulling hard against the stream."

THE END.

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